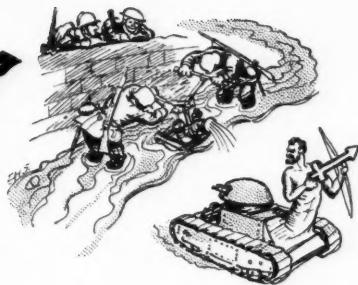


PUNCHED OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI



Vol. CXCVII No. 5148

November 29 1939

Charivaria

It seems just now that Herr HITLER's greatest difficulty is in catching up with his followers.

Now for a piece of real news. It seems that a gossip-writer recently ran across an entertainer who hasn't yet written this war's "Tipperary."

"Beer at eightpence per half-pint is now available for the B.E.F." says a newspaper. Long queues are forming to watch who buys a bottle.

"After that each vessel followed with her nose literally glued to the stern of her next-ahead and, on safe arrival at Arkangel, all signalled to their trawler escort their gratitude for what had been done for them."—*Daily Paper*.

When they'd been pried apart, that is.



"What kind of work will war correspondents do when peace is declared?" asks a correspondent. Well, they can always report ice-hockey.

A jazz band contest has been held in the Midlands. It's a pity this should have clashed with the war.



A German wireless speaker stated there was one more name to add to the list of those responsible for the Munich bomb explosion. We can only think of one ourselves—Uncle Tom Cobley.

STALIN is said to drink large quantities of tea. Nevertheless, we shall not send him a moustache cup this Christmas.

To-day's Great Thought

"Evacuation will, if it does not re-act the other way, bring town and country closer together."—*Hampshire Herald*.

A "secret news" paragraph thinks Dr. GOEBBELS may be in the running for leadership if anything happens to the FUEHRER. In that case he would be well advised to keep on running.

Two airmen have succeeded in flying twenty-five thousand feet into the stratosphere. It is thought that they wanted to have a look at the Cost of Living.

A bagpiper was an attraction at a London bottle-party. Many patrons complained of the draught and it was discovered that before his performance he had filled his instrument with fresh air from outside.



1939 and All That

ACCORDING to the "National Zeitung" as quoted by one of our morning papers "the Fuehrer has told his intimates that when he has conquered England he will appoint a Stathalter there, depose the Royal House, and have himself crowned king."

God grant I may be standing
And friends of mine with me
When Hitler makes his landing
In Sussex by the sea,
And loud bells rock the steeples
And over us shall reign
The Father of His Peoples,
Adolphus the Insane.

I want to watch the barges
That grind the pebbly coast,
The helmets and the targes
Of Himmler and his host,
The line of crooked crosses
Wave proud before the throng
Of those dear Nazi bosses
Whom I have loved so long.

Be mine to lift up Goering
On to his palfrey's seat
Before he starts a-spurring
To Senlac, and to greet
Young Hess the wild sea-ranger
And point him out his way—
Not easy for a stranger
Who lands at Norman's Bay.

The Leader's thousand doubles
Shall heave the mace on high,
The battle songs of Goebbels
Ring out from Hove to Rye;
Ah! let me be presented,
His lowliest worshipper,
When Adolf the Demented
Is crowned at Westminster.

Fling open all the castles
And come to kiss his hand,
The paper-hanger's vassals
Are gathering on the strand,
Now let there be no slaughters,
Now humbly welcome in
The shark-spawn of the waters,
The stoat's-nest of Berlin.

EVOE.

○ ○

From the Home Front

Without Malice

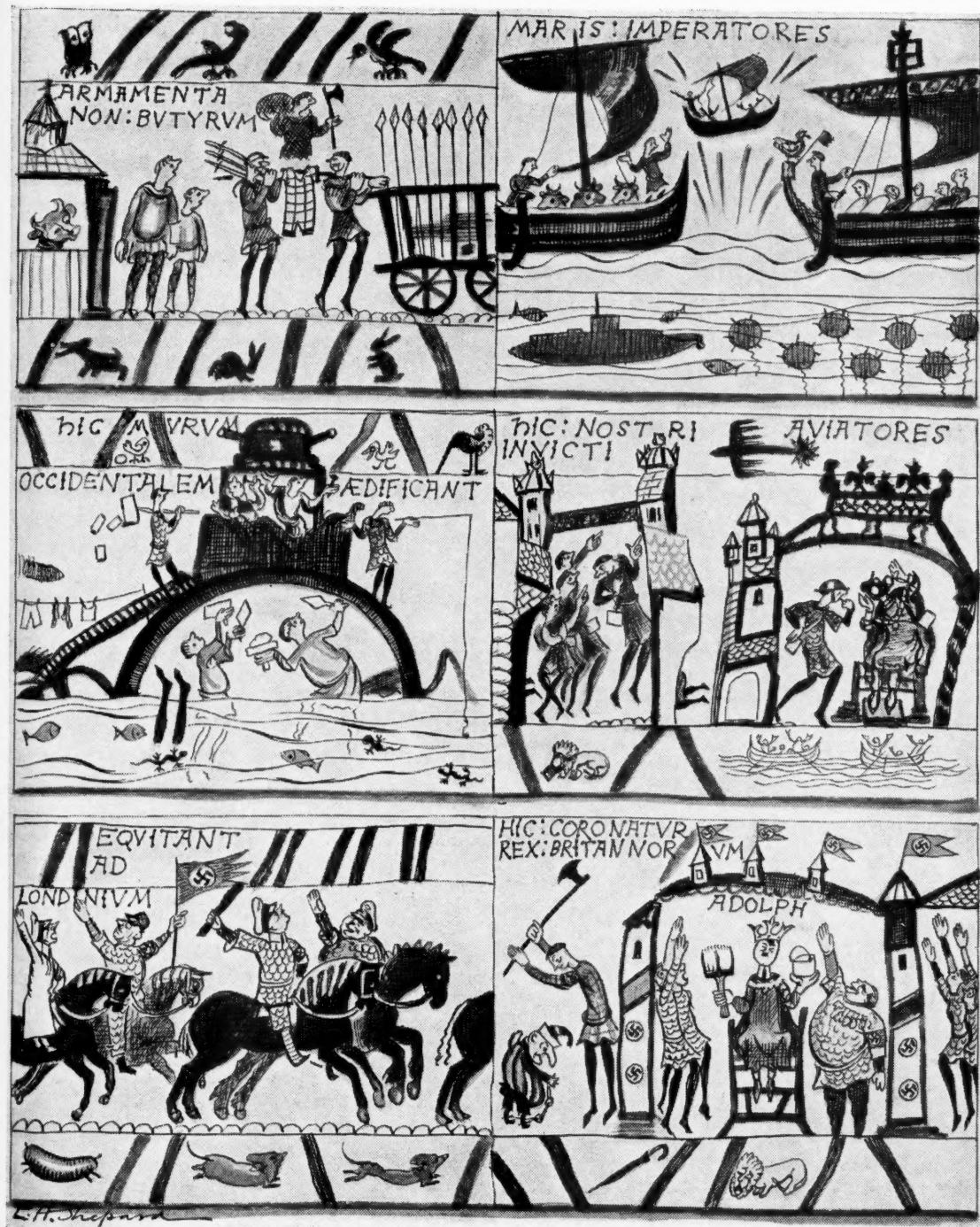
THIS inculcation in the mind of the common soldier of a sense of order and neatness is one of the Army's most cherished tasks. It is done in all sorts of ways, but chiefly by the manner in which the soldier is taught to keep his possessions. Your ordinary householder, asked to make a heap of clothes tidy, would fold them up—I mean the things susceptible of folding—put them on a chair with his coat hanging over the back, place the boots beneath and

call it a day. We are not satisfied with this; repetition, balance, is the essence of our conception of display. If you have two of anything you place one on the left, the other on the right; single articles are placed one upon another in the middle; if you have three of something you throw one away or apply for a transfer to the Navy. Naturally, since a soldier's possessions must be confined to a floor-space of roughly four feet by three (I don't mean he sleeps in that space; we are talking of display now), the result is a formidable pyramid, growing gradually higher and higher as fresh gifts reach us from the War Office. To assemble such a pyramid, to align it with the minute precision required by the military eye, to ensure that whatever lies to right or left of it is duplicated by something on the other side, to make certain above all that the complicated structure has no tendency to totter and perhaps (*horrible dictu*) crash to ruins at the supreme moment of inspection, requires a deal of skill and loving care, with perhaps a dash of luck. But the result more than repays the labour expended. The wish to create a thing of beauty where none existed before, a wish that lies, consciously or unconsciously, deep in the heart of even the lowliest of us, is consummated day by day in the erection (or "stacking," as we call it) of the soldier's kit. Few of us will forget the debt we owe to the Army for this privilege, for the precious knowledge that loveliness may grow beneath our hands out of the most unlovely materials.

When the war is over and I return to that far unrealisable home from which I came I propose to make a point of continuing to stack my possessions in the manner to which I have grown accustomed. I shall make my pyramid, I think, in my bedroom, at the foot of my bed, and I give notice here and now that I shall expect all other members of my household to do likewise at the foot of theirs. It will do them good.

As to the manner in which I shall go to work, it will, so far as my plans are advanced at present, be as follows: First, I shall take my mattress and place it, doubled over, on the floor in such a way that the small label bearing the maker's name shall be at the upper right-hand corner as one faces the bed and the place where I scorched the cover on that memorable night in 1932 be concealed from sight. Upon this I shall set my six blankets in order of thickness, folded three times endways and twice sideways, thus, unless I am mistaken, bringing the four thin blue top-stripings to the front. Immediately above the blankets but set back so as to lie exactly along the rearmost of the four blue stripings, I shall place my two silken sheets, cunningly folded to display their lace tops to the best advantage, and above them again will lie the drier of my two vast Turkish towels. Now, observe this. The towel will be folded *once only* lengthways and when in position its frilled ends will hang down on either side of the piled sheets and blankets, great care being taken to see that the frills touch, but no more than touch, the upper surface of the mattress. If the towel is too long it must be cut down; if too short it must be returned to the bathroom.

We have now completed what may be called the body or *corpus* of the work, but much remains to be done. It will be noticed, if the structure is observed from the side, that a considerable area of the mattress *behind* the blankets—that is to say between the rear of the blankets and the end of the bed—is left bare. Here go my three pillows, my hot-water bottle with the stopper *out* (it is an interesting question whether the stopper would look best set exactly in the centre of the bottle or attached to the handle by a two-inch piece of string), and of course my bed-socks, if I am old enough by the end of the war to wear them. Naturally one sock will be on the *left* of



ADOLF THE CONQUEROR

A PIECE FROM THE BERCHTESGADEN TAPESTRY

(See opposite page)



"'Struth! I'll bet old 'Itler's gettin' wild. 'Ere I am, still alive an' kickin', an' I been torpedoed three times—twice of 'em on a Friday."

the hot-water bottle, the other on the right, with the toe in each case to the front.

To return to the main or frontal pile. I had just, if you remember, arranged the towel to my satisfaction. The next step requires a little extra care and attention. I have to display to the best advantage the suit that I wore yesterday and am not wearing this morning, or alternatively the suit that I am wearing later on to-day but have not yet had time to put on. Very well. First I lift the coat, tear the linings out of the pockets and burn them, reverse the lapels and lay the coat on its front on the floor. Then I raise the arms and stuff them up the legs of the trousers, which must of course be pulled inside out. I now carefully lay the top hem of the trousers against the bottom hem of the coat and roll the combined arms and legs out of sight. The result, kept in place by the waistcoat which is buttoned tightly around it, is laid centrally on the towel and surmounted by my tooth-brush, sponge, razor, comb and collar-actuating studs, Nos. 1 and 2.

At this point I may stop. But if I feel fit and well I shall probably not rest until I have set out at the four corners my riding-boots, my shooting-boots, my swimming-boots and my boots, general purpose. Between, and at the same time outside these, if I make myself clear, must lie my riding crop, my twelve-bore, my water-wings and my walking-stick. My horse, if I have one and it happens to be in my bedroom, will have to be stuffed under the bed out of sight. It is an invariable rule in the composition of these pyramids that whatever will not fit in an orderly manner into the

structure must be stuffed away out of sight. I have known (though I should not like this to go any further) a wet towel, a copy of *The Daily Telegraph*, a tin of sardines (open) and two old gym-shoes to be concealed within the folds of a single blanket in obedience to this principle. But naturally you can't put a horse between blankets; at least you can, but two orderly officers in three would spot there was something there.

However, I am becoming a little confused. Even if there is a horse in my bedroom when this war is over there will certainly not be an orderly officer. Whatever the result of the struggle may be, conditions are hardly likely to be as chaotic as that. So the question of what to do with this extremely problematical horse does not arise.

If I were able to cross two hockey-sticks over the top of the pyramid in such a way that their opposite angles were equal each to each, would that, do you think, lend balance to the whole affair?

H. F. E.

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CHRISTMAS CARDS

ONCE more the Invalid Children's Aid Association asks you to help by buying "Peter Rabbit" Christmas Cards. Money from the sale of these cards goes to endow beds at the Association's Heart Home for Children at West Wickham, and now money is more needed than ever. The cards are coloured "Peter Rabbit" designs and cost two-pence each with envelopes; they may be ordered from the Hon. ANGELA BARING, Itchen Stoke Manor, Alresford, Hants.

A Hundred Years of Cycling

AMID the hush of Hitler's war many of us are being just a wee bit forgetful about the goings-on in the great big world of scientific progress, and the centenary of one of the greatest social movements of all time—cycling—has gone almost unnoticed.

To us modern cyclists, with our caliper brakes, three-speed gears and multi-spring saddles, those early days seem very far away—as indeed they are—but it must never be said that we have forgotten the debt we owe to the pioneers who, so that we might ride in comfort, gave up time, money and honour. (And if anybody questions that last bit we would remind them of Joe Trundle, Esq., famous inventor of the puncture outfit, who gave up a Miss Honour Schultze so that nothing should interfere with his life-work.)

The bicycle came to man at a particularly fitting time. On the throne of England the young girl Victoria, as yet unwed, brought the inspiration for a new tide of prosperity in Britain—and indeed the world. The hammers of the Industrial Revolution began to beat with a vigorous clangor. Art, Science and Medicine kept pace with the bounding progress of Industry.

Robert Louis Stevenson's locomotive was quickly followed by Bunsen's stink-bomb. And the astonished nations had hardly recovered from the announcement of Pasteur's discovery of milk when, in Royal Edinburgh, Lister produced his Second Hungarian Rhapsody. Almost it seemed as though man's ingenuity had drained dry the cup of invention, yet there was still another to come—the bicycle.

It may be true, as history tells us, that the bicycle was actually invented by the Ancient Chinese, but there seems little doubt that when they had invented it they did not know what it was for and just allowed it to stand up against a wall and rust.

(No savee—that was the trouble with the Ancient Chinese: although to their credit it must be said that they were the first people to think of the idea of eating food. Before that it had just been thrown away.)

Chinese or no Chinese, the bicycle as we know it to-day may be said to owe its birth to those vast hordes of country folk who rushed to the prosperous cities to share in the distribution of wealth that the machine age had brought. The towns gave them a bigger wage, but their affections were still in the country and at week-ends they

longed to return. Trains then were neither cheap nor convenient and, truth to tell, the good English folk were scared to death of the things. The problem threatened to cause grave unrest.

Among the few who appreciated the difficulty was the far-sighted Lord Palmerston, but he, busily fixing up Anna Neagle and Anton Walbrook, had no time to attempt a solution.

Still, the march of progress could not for long be halted, and in the tiny Northumbrian village of Throcklingtonhaugh the birth cries of the bicycle were first heard. To Thomas Leggett, shot-firer in a humble cheese quarry, the inspiration came one lonely winter's day.

He had set out to walk back to the town. At every step his aching feet rebelled. "Oh, how much easier it would all be," he thought, "if only I had a bicycle!"

There and then the idea was born, and in his spare time the world's first bicycle was built. His materials were of the simplest—a piece of scrap wardrobe, the inside of a long-discarded copper boiler, a few old gussets. Gradually the machine took shape.

His early efforts failed miserably. Tried out on Blakemoor Common, the new machine refused to travel an inch. Crestfallen, Leggett wandered miserably home amid the jeers of his workmates. But he was not discouraged for long. Why had he failed? What was needed to make it go? What about wheels? he thought. He was sure he was on the right track at last. Excitedly he tried again, with wheels this time, and the experiment was a huge success.

However, his tribulations were not yet over. Jealous of the interest aroused by the new machine, the Church thumped its pulpits and denounced his contraption as an abomination. If man had needed wheels, they said, Providence would have seen fit to supply them. Besides, they pointed out, there was a very grave danger that old men might catch their whiskers in the front forks.

Leggett had his answer ready—the Dundreary whisker! And the opposition of the Church was finally stilled on the day that Grace Darling, on her little bicycle, bravely rode out to rescue the survivors of the *Forfarshire*.

Among the common people the bicycle became the accepted mode of travel, but at first the gentry held aloof. They deplored the habit of shouting "Hey!" when some careless pedestrian

got in the way. The invention of the bicycle-bell by the famous Tinkle Brothers of Bristol swept away this difficulty, and soon a whole nation was on wheels.

And then, at the height of his machine's popularity, the inventor died, lonely and penniless, forgotten by those who owed him most. As one poet of the times expressed it:

"How did we thank him? No joy bells rang;
No paens greeted; no poets sang;
No cannons thundered from a grateful land
Acclaiming what had come from Leggett's hand.
We took the gift so humbly, simply given,
And, coldly selfish, left our debt to Heaven."

Attempts were made to get up a subscription for the erection of a monument in Throcklingtonhaugh Churchyard—a simple affair, with a few angels and cherubs bowling round Leggett on their bicycles—but the Crimean War intervened and the money had to be returned.

After Leggett's death others brought new and thrilling improvements: the front mudguard, wire spokes, the rear mudguard, the pneumatic tyre and celluloid inflator.

In 1856 Sir Robert Peel abolished the cycle tax and hundreds of poor people were able for the first time to free-wheel down the hills of their native land. In 1898 Adam Smith's writings on the Division of Labour paved the way for a supreme development—the tandem, immortalised in popular song as the "bicycle built for two."

With the final improvement, the three-speed gear, the cycle replaced the horse as the friend of man, and Leggett's invention had the monument he himself would have wished—a happy people combining healthful exercise with the joys of travel.

To-day, as we look back over a hundred years of cycling, we can only marvel at so glorious a past.

And what of its future? We shall probably never know.

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"For two centuries we have dismissed Queen Anne as 'Dull,' 'Good,' and 'Dead.' Yet this 'dull, good' woman . . . rose up against the friend to whom she had been bound for thirty years—the mighty Duchess of Marlborough—and overthrew her. With 9 plates."—*Book Catalogue*.

And that's how "Aunt Sally" was born.

At the Pictures

THEY LAUGHED WHEN IT SET OUT TO CROSS

LUCKILY for Mr. Punch's Navy Number, one of the week's Big Films is definitely nautical. *Rulers of the Sea* (Director: FRANK LLOYD) is all about the first crossing of the Atlantic by steam, and is loud with the derisive guffaws of the people who said it couldn't be done. We, though, have inside information; besides, WILL FYFFE and DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS Junior are responsible for the ship concerned and MONTAGUE LOVE (always on the less favoured side) is one of the principal scoffers. There are no surprises, then, as far as the main theme goes; but that doesn't prevent the film from being exciting and interesting. WILL FYFFE is John Shaw, who "knew JIMMY WATT," and made the engines; Mr. FAIRBANKS is David Gillespie, who wanted to be on the bridge of the first steamboat to cross the Atlantic but went, for the good of the cause, as second engineer; MARGARET LOCKWOOD is Shaw's daughter, Mary, who . . . you can guess that part.

The picture is described as "a fictional story, inspired by facts," and it can't be taken as historical, but I imagine that the spirit of it is right. There were such difficulties as this in the way of the pioneers of steam; they may not have come one on top of another in so dramatic a sequence, but equal determination must have been needed to overcome them. In this story, first, no one will believe in Shaw's engines; when someone does finance the building of a ship for them, a fire destroys the work; and the little steamship that finally makes the crossing does so only after half the movables have been burned as fuel and the crew and passengers have been near to mutiny.

There are some brilliantly spectacular and exciting storm-at-sea scenes here; Mr. LLOYD is admirable at this kind of thing, which is, in spite of Mr. FYFFE's excellent performance, the real strength of the picture. Mr. FAIRBANKS and Miss LOCKWOOD are in the usual subsidiary position of juvenile

leads in a film containing a character actor, but they too are good though a little shaky with their Scots accent. An outstanding member of the supporting cast is GEORGE BANCROFT as the tough skipper of a sailing-ship.



THE POCKET PIONEER
John Shaw WILL FYFFE
David Gillespie DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS, JR.



A MODEL MONARCH
Maximilian BRIAN AHERNE

More history — about twenty-five years later. The film called *Juarez* (Director: WILLIAM DIETERLE) ought, I think, to be called *Maximilian*: his, broadly speaking, is the story it tells. PAUL MUNI as Benito Juarez is very

fine; he makes one feel the power, the magnetism, the courage of this "ugly little man" as Porfirio Diaz (JOHN GARFIELD) calls him; he even makes him seem little, and Mr. MUNI is fairly tall; but it is *Maximilian* who has the fat part and BRIAN AHERNE who does notably well with it. Although the stars are Mr. MUNI and BETTE DAVIS (the Empress Carlota), Mr. AHERNE, I think, is the one you will remember.

This is a sound, good picture. The emphasis is historically perhaps not on quite the right things, but there are no serious liberties with fact and dramatically it is all extremely effective. The story is straightforwardly told, from the time when Napoleon III (CLAUDE RAINS) decides that the Crown of Mexico shall be offered to *Maximilian* to the time when *Juarez* murmurs "Forgive me" over the executed Emperor's body. Necessarily the story is episodic; the

figure of *Maximilian* holds it together. The cast list is very long and full of well-known players, and the whole thing is expensively and carefully mounted. Much of the photography is beautiful; there are exciting and spectacular scenes; and almost the only serious criticism I can offer is of the rather self-conscious attempts here and there to point a modern application by bringing in such words as "non-intervention."

I might have mentioned *Over the Moon* (Director: THORNTON FREE-LAND) last week; but if there were less space I wouldn't mention it even now. It is a piece of pure escape-fiction, the bones of which show all too plainly through the tinsel. Jane Benson (MERLE OBERON) comes into eighteen million pounds and does enough with it to please the poor girls in the audience before making up her tiff with the poor doctor who loves her (REX HARRISON). There is no climax to the picture at all; it just leaves off. There is some good small-part playing, and it is all Glorious Technicolor. R. M.

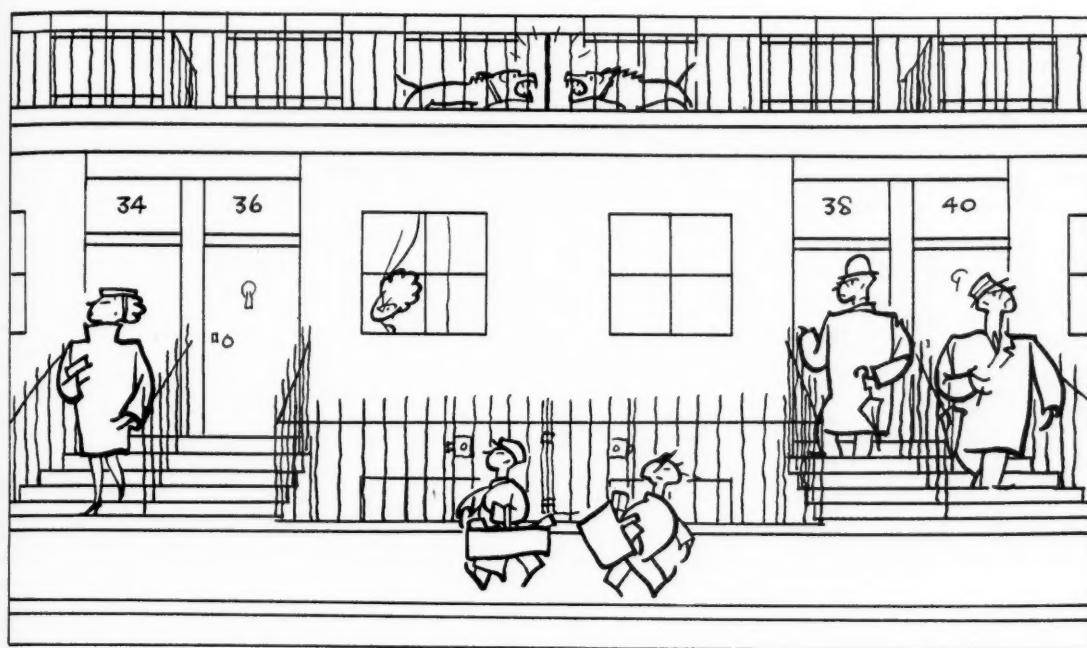
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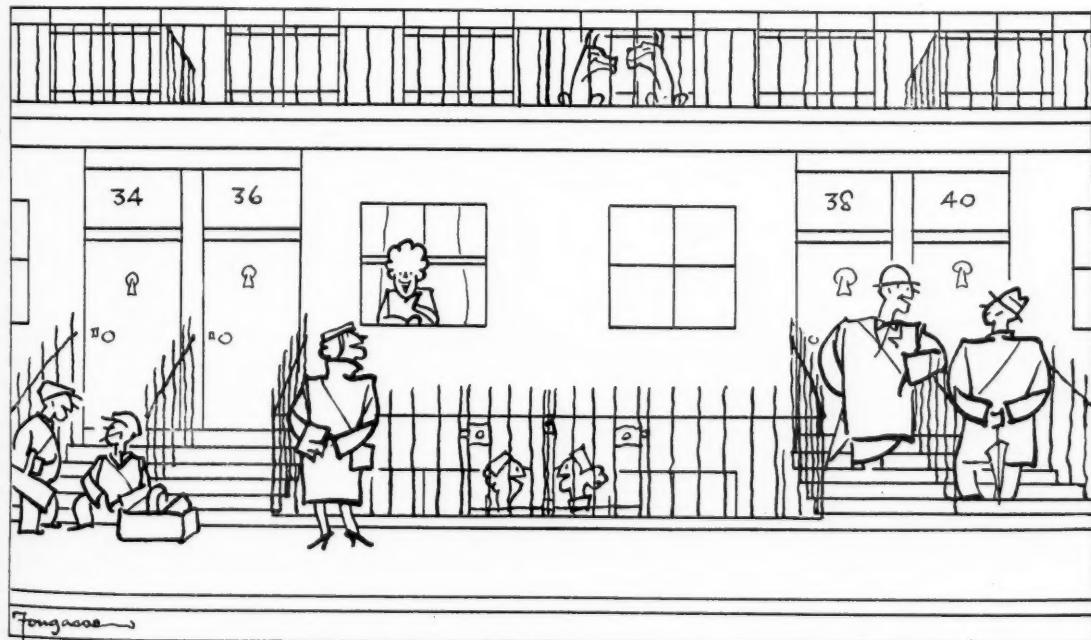
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THE CHANGING FACE OF BRITAIN

XVI.—RESIDENTIAL AREA



1



2



"I'm afraid, Ma'am, the little man has German measles."

Behind the Lines

X.—Black-Out

IT'S hard to know the ins
And outs of war.
I'd used the drawing-pins
The night before;

I left them in the wall,
Or thought I did.
But did I? Not at all.
They've gone and hid.

Perhaps I took them out
And put them—where?
Well, somewhere just about,
Try over there . . .

I put them somewhere queer . . .
Now, wait a bit . . .
I said "I'll put them here . . ."
Of course! That's it!

Now everybody, look:
I know I had
Some handy book . . . some book . . .
The Shropshire Lad?

Look quick before it's dark—
It may have been
The Hunting of The Snark . . .
Or Through the Green?

Was that the night before?
Well, never mind—
We'll have to have some more:
The box . . . Behind—

Oh, no, an envelope,
It's on the chair . . .
No, over there . . . I hope . . .
Or over there? . . .

Be quick! It's nearly pitch,
I cannot see—
Which is necessity and which
Is only A.R.P.

* * * * *

Each night the same old argument begins:
We reach the same old impasse every night:
We cannot find the pins without the light,
We can't turn on the light without the pins. A. A. M.

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Stirring Times

(From O. I. M. Board, "Daily Snoop" War Reporter)
With the B.E.F. in France

TUESDAY

YOU people at home little realise what thrills we have at the Front. You don't hear much about them, and that is quite right; what you hear Hitler hears, and the boys here are all agreed that we're not going to help him any.

But through the kindness of a Censor (name unmentionable, but I happen to have been at school not a thousand miles from him) I am in a position to give a few examples—with everything suppressed, *bien entendu* (as our magnificent Allies say) which might help the enemy.

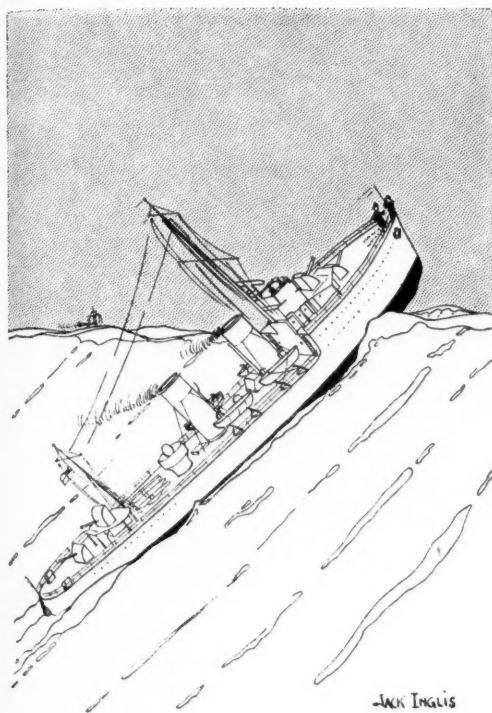
Yesterday, for instance, with a Staff Officer, I trudged several hundred yards through mud which was almost ankle-deep. I was glad I had brought my gum-boots, which come up to my thighs. They were given to me by an uncle on a trawler. "Ba goom!" said a witty Yorkshireman from a north-country regiment, as I splodged past him through the mud. He was smoking a cigarette. Don't forget that the troops can smoke all the cigarettes you send them. They have a great admiration for the French and the part they have played in European civilisation. But as for their cigarettes . . . well, they simply aren't used to them. "Taast laak liquorish, ba goom!" said a corporal in a regiment from the north-eastern counties.

Yard after yard we went along that lonely road under the sullen November sky. "You see," said the Staff Officer to me (and he was a man who had up not merely the Mons Star but a little red ribbon of which few grasp the significance), "you and I may be having a bad time now, what with the mud and the bad visibility, but this is really a very comfortable war."

And so it is. We got to a dug-out somewhere in the British zone, and there we found three soldiers having tea. Mothers and wives needn't worry; the British Army, whatever Goebbels may say, is having its tea and intends to go on having its tea. I have just heard, on absolutely reliable authority, that Lord Gort and the Duke of Gloucester had two cups each yesterday.

Well, there were those three. One came from Southern Ireland, one from Eastern England, and one from Northern Scotland. Kipling would have rejoiced in them; I am sorry I cannot be more specific about their birth-places, but I am

sure that to H long be p beda o' th dece "Fri He not was pan quite war stock vani We now a vil pan bille I by t bow was lady had Qu



"Honestly—this is like nothing on earth."

sure that their friends in their home-towns will understand that this time we definitely are not giving anything away to Hitler. They talked; and how they talked! It wasn't long before I had diagnosed one of them (it would hardly be prudent to say which) as an Old Sweat. "Howly Mike, bedad!" he said, "Fritz wouldn't be afther lookin' a dhrop o' this." The New Army is in every way equal to its predecessor of '14, but it hasn't yet learnt to call the Nazis "Fritz."

Heartened by a certainty that such men as these could not be beaten, we trudged back through the slush, which was by now almost ankle-deep. "You see," said my companion, "this really suits them, and Gracie Fields made it quite perfect. Apart from which they hear all about the war on the wireless, which last time we couldn't." He is a stockbroker in civil life, but out here rank and dignity vanish; there are just men.

Well, on we trudged, until gradually (and the mud, by now, barely covered the soles of my gum-boots) we reached a village Somewhere Else in the British Zone. My companion guided me to a cottage where one of our men is billeted when not in his gun-pit.

I was shown over his room. It was speechless. Judging by the football groups on the wall and the crested matchbowls it was evident that the lodger (if I may call him such) was a member of one of our Ancient Universities. The landlady, an apple-cheeked, wrinkled, typical old French dame, had obviously taken him under her wing as an adopted son. "Que voulez-vous, c'est la guerre, n'est ce-pas," she kept on

remarking as she showed us round. I ventured, greatly daring, in the end, to ask her what she thought of her tenant—a connoisseur, by the way, for I noticed in a rapid survey that he had Watts's "Hope" hung over his bed. "Mais, monsieur," she replied, shrugging her shoulders and spreading her hands in that inimitable Gallic way, "il est rigolo."

My companion's face stiffened. I had to explain. We have plenty of jokes in the British Zone. He thought she had said "Gigolo."

We said good-bye to our kind hostess and were taken by car (obviously I cannot specify the make, but you can probably guess it) to an aerodrome somewhere else in the British Zone. There we saw a number of R.A.F. men, several of whom were in civil life stockbrokers. And They Have a Gadget!

Weather is all-important to our gallant flying-men. They have fallen back upon the simplest and most reliable forecaster of all. On the door of every shedment and hutment in the encampment, all cunningly camouflaged, hangs a strip of seaweed. "Whenever," said a gay young airman to me (in civil life a stockbroker), "we touch the seaweed we know it is going to be dry."

The Nazis have taken on more than they bargained for.

* * * * *

PS.—For other versions of the same stories see all the other papers. J. C. S.

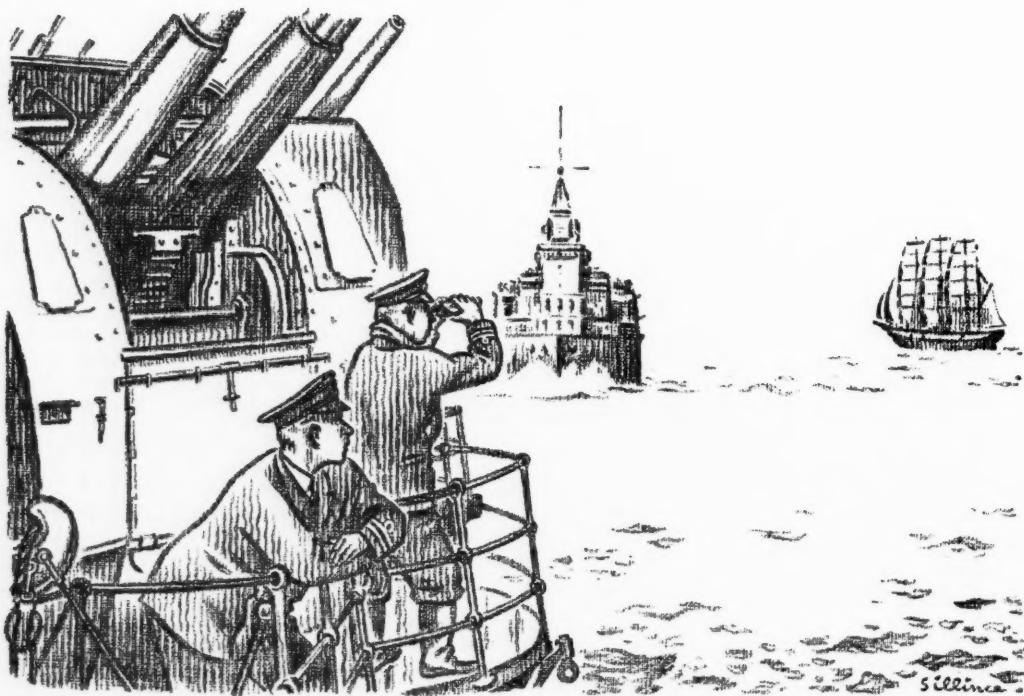
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"Another use for the cold frame now is to sow broad beans or round-seeded peas . . ."—*Daily Paper*.

But don't blame us if you reap a whirlwind.



"I wouldn't mind if he looked as though he might want it for medicinal purposes."



"I should say the idea is that the wind catches in those gadgets on the masts and pushes her along."

Missed

THERE was a mist
That coldly kissed
The tentative top
Of the turnip crop.
Scanning a fence,
My eye could sense
A blurred
But indeterminate bird,
Preening its ill-defined
Behind.
I felt it fly
In a fumid sky,
Dodging a dun
Uncertain sun
That blushed and blinked
And was indistinct.
I fancy I might
Have marked its flight
Where furrow and field
Were half-revealed
And autumn crocus
Grew out of focus
And kindly kine
Had a vague outline
And no horizon
To set their eyes on.

Or did it land,
On the other hand,
Down in the dark
Uncertain park
Where even the deer
Were so unclear
I didn't quite know
A dam and a doe
And a hart
Apart,
And clods and clover
Were so slurred over
I muddled up moles
With water-voles
And stoats
With ready-made overcoats
(Not that I'm clever
About that ever)?
Those were the days
When hirsute haze
Softened the edges
Of humps and hedges
And blossom and blight
Were lost to sight
In shadowy grasses—
And so were my glasses.



THE DEVIL-FISH

(With Mr. Punch's best wishes to the First Lord of the Admiralty on his sixty-fifth birthday.)

November 29 1939



"If this blinkin' rain keeps up much longer we'll 'ave the perishin' Siegfried Line full o' pocket battleships."

PUNCH AND THE NAVY

PUNCH appeared just after the British sailor cut off his pigtail, by Admiralty orders, and just before the fleet was fitted with its first screw propeller. It acted therefore as a kind of literary convoy through the critical period while the wooden walls were turning to iron, the Merchant Service was "leaving the sea and going into steam," Mr. PRIMSOLL was agitating Parliament, the great passenger lines were being laid down, and the submarine invented, till from 1914 to 1918 the Navies undertook together the perilous duties which have fallen to them again at the moment.

"At five o'clock we have our tea
And catch our usual bus;
So thank the Lord for those at sea
Who guard the likes of us . . ."

the heartfelt cry of the City man of 1915, whose gratitude is not less twenty-four years after.

The brandy-logged mariner, the jolly Jack tar, and the "Lieutenant Heaviswell of the H.M.S. *Flirt*," who figure in *Punch* during the 'sixties have this at least in common with their modern descendants—a keen sense of humour. The sea has its own brand of Attic salt, and if it is a question of repartee, sailors are apt to have the last word, for while always courteous to genuine inquirers they have a gift of deflating the merely inquisitive. With Ulysses and the Ancient Mariner and Jim Hawkins as their fair representatives, they are the best story-tellers in the world (though the submarine may have replaced the sea-serpent as hero), and they like a joke. They have a particular appreciation of humour arising from discomfort, misfortune and hard effort, the man who forgets, loses and spills things, the engineer who will get up more speed even if it means burning whisky, the comments from the battered tramp steamer on the giant luxury liner whose cups and saucers are only just shifted by the gale, the happy retorts of the guilty party and ingenious excuses of all kinds. Above all they like a joke in wartime, since discipline and danger are usually the parents of humour; a danger which is shared by the fighting Navy and the Merchant Service down to the smallest of the small craft—no one is likely to forget the Channel steamers who became minelayers, and the fishing-smacks who did duty as Q-boats, from 1914 to 1918, besides the thousands of ships who carried through essential cargoes unsung and unmentioned:—

"In Admiralty despatches their names are seldom heard;
They justify their being by more than written word."

This supplement is a selection from *Punch* through nearly a hundred years from the expressive moments of the habitually Silent Service.

P. M. K.



THE SAILOR'S SECRET.

1841

In the year—let me see—but no matter about the date—my father and mother died of a typhus fever, leaving me to the care of an only relative, and uncle, by my father's side. His name was Box, as my name is Box. I was a baby in long clothes at that time, not even so much as christened; so uncle, taking the hint, I suppose, from the lid of his sea-chest, had me called *Bellophon* Box. *Bellophon* being the name of the ship of which he was sailing master.

I shan't say anything about my education; though I was brought up in



A FIRST-RATE BOARDING-SCHOOL.

It's not much to boast of; but as soon as I could bear the weight of a cockade and a dirk, uncle got me a berth as midshipman on board his own ship. So there I was, *Mr. Bellophon* Box. I didn't like the sea or the service, being continually disgusted at the partiality shown towards me, for in less than a month I was put over the heads of all my superior officers. You may stare—but it's true; for *I was mast-headed* for a week at a stretch. When we put into port, Captain —— called me into his cabin, and politely informed me that if I chose to go on shore, and should find it inconvenient to return, no impertinent inquiries should be made after me. I availed myself of the hint, and exactly one year and two months after setting foot on board the *Bellophon*, I was *Master Bellophon* Box again.

Well, now for my story. There was one Tom Johnson on board, a *fok'sell* man, as they called him, who was very kind to me; he tried to teach me to turn a quid, and generously helped me to drink my grog. As I was unmercifully quizzed in the cockpit, I grew more partial to the society of Tom than to that of my brother middies. Tom always addressed me, "Sir," and they named me Puddinghead; till at last we might be called friends. During many a night-watch, when I have sneaked away for a snooze among the hen-coops, has Tom saved me from detection, and the consequent pleasant occupation of carrying about a bucket of water on the end of a capstan bar.

I had been on board about a month—perhaps two—when the order came down from the Admiralty for the men to cut off their tails. Lord, what a scene was there! I wonder it didn't cause a mutiny! I think it would have done so, but half the crew were laid up with colds in their heads, from the suddenness of the change, though an extra allowance of rum was served out to rub them with to prevent such consequences; but the purser not giving any definite directions, whether the application was to be external or internal, the liquor, I regret to say, for the honour of the British Navy, was applied much lower down. For some weeks the men seemed half-crazed, and were almost as unmanageable as ships that had lost their rudders. Well, so they had! It was a melancholy sight to see piles of beautiful tails with little labels tied to them, like the instructions on a physic-bottle; each directed to some favoured relative or sweetheart of the *curtailed* seamen. What a strange appearance must Portsmouth, and Falmouth, and Plymouth, and all the other mouths that are filled with sea-stores, have presented, when the precious remembrances were distributed! I wish some artist would consider it; for I think it's a shame that there should be no record of such an interesting circumstance.

One night, shortly after this visitation, it blew great guns. Large

black clouds, like chimney-sweepers' feather-beds, scuttled over our heads, and the rain came pouring down like—like winking. Tom had been promoted, and was sent up aloft to reef a sail, when one of the horses giving way, down came Tom Johnson, and snap went a leg and an arm. I was ordered to see him carried below, an office which I readily performed, for I liked the man—and they don't allow umbrellas in the Navy.

"What's the matter?" said the surgeon.

"Nothing particular, Sir; on'y Tom's broke his legs and his arms by a fall from the yard," replied a seaman.

Tom groaned, as though he did consider it something very particular.

He was soon stripped and the shattered bones set, which was no easy matter, the ship pitching and tossing about as she did. I sat down beside his berth, holding on as well as I could. The wind howled through the rigging, making the vessel seem like an infernal Eolian harp; the thunder rumbled like an indisposed giant, and to make things more agreeable, a gun broke from its lashings, and had it all its own way for about a quarter of an hour. Tom groaned most pitifully. I looked at him, and if I were to live for a thousand years, I shall never forget the expression of his face. His lips were blue, and—no matter, I'm not clever at portrait painting: but imagine an old-fashioned Saracen's Head—not the fine handsome fellow they have stuck on Snow Hill, but one of the griffins of 1809—and you have Tom's phiz, only it wants touching with all the colours of a painter's palette. I was quite frightened, and could only stammer out, "Why T-o-o-m!"

"It's all up, Sir," says he; "I must go; I feel it."

"Don't be foolish," I replied; "Don't die till I call the surgeon. It was a stupid speech, I acknowledge, but I could not help it at the time.

"No, no; don't call the surgeon, Mr. Box; he's done all he can, Sir. But it's here—it's here!" and then he made an effort to thump his heart, or the back of his head, I couldn't make out which.

I trembled like a jelly. I had once seen a melodrama, and I recollect that the villain of the piece had used the same action, the same words.

"Mr. Box," groaned Tom, "I've a-a-secret as makes me very uneasy, Sir."

"Indeed, Tom," I replied; "hadn't you better confess the mur—" murder, I was a going to say, but I thought it might not be polite, considering Tom's situation.

The ruffian, for such he looked then, tried to raise himself, but another lurch of the *Bellophon* sent him on his back, and myself on my beam-ends. As soon as I recovered my former position, Tom continued—

"Mr. Box, dare I trust you, Sir? if I could do so, I'm sartin as how I should soon be easier."

"Of course," said I, "of course; out with it, and I promise never to betray your confidence."

"Then come, come here," gasped the suffering wretch; "give us your hand, Sir."

I instinctively shrunk back with horror!

"Don't be long, Mr. Box, for every minute makes it worse," and then his Saracen's Head changed to a feminine expression, and resembled the *Belle Sauvage*.

I couldn't resist the appeal; so placing my hand in his, Tom put it over his shoulder, and, with a ghastly smile, said, "Pull it out, Sir!"

"Pull what out?"

"My secret, Mr. Box; it's hurting on me!"

I thought that he had grown delirious; so, in order to soothe him as much as possible, I forced my hand under his shirt-collar, and what do you think I found? Why, a *PIGTAIL*—his pigtail, which he had contrived to conceal between his shirt and his skin, when the barbarous order of the Admiralty had been put into execution.



A NAUTICAL TALE.

OUR YOUNG LADY AT SPITHEAD. 1853

MISS LAURA TREMAINE to her Sister, the Wife of AUGUSTUS FLOPP, Esq., M.P.

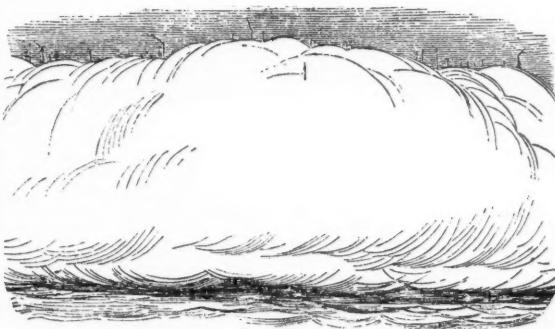
"MY DEAREST LOUISA,

"Certainly, of all the unkind and churlish creatures that ever lived, the House of Commons contains the very worst specimens, and, my dear, they are all alike, so there is no use in your making a protest on behalf of your own Honourable Member. Not to take you to the Spithead Review, and then to plead, as an apology, that there were no ships for your accommodation! And this is the omnipotent Parliament, that has only to say that coals shall not smoke, and they instantly emit nothing but perfumed incense; that cabmen shall not cheat, and they at once become as polite as guardsmen (and a great deal politer); that candidates shall not bribe, and they immediately begin to pay the voters who have opposed them, just to prevent the poor men from being unlawfully rewarded by their own friends. And yet this wonderful Parliament pretends that it cannot find a ship or two to take its own wives to see the Queen review the fleet! The men must think you are perfect geese, my dear Louisa, to offer you such rubbishing excuses. It is very well for Augustus that he married you and not me, as he was once inclined to do (he was, so you need not make a face), for you accept 'the House' as an excuse for everything, and are afraid to look at the newspaper in the morning to see what hour Parliament rose, for fear you should discover that he could not have been waiting for a division at three. And you believe, too, that it is necessary for him to be full dressed for a Debate, and that it produces just the same effect upon him as champagne does upon ordinary men. O Louisa! But you like it, I believe.

"Well, as I have not got an Augustus to tell me stories and leave me at home, I went with Lady de Gules and her sister to Portsmouth, and every kind of care was taken of us. We went from the hotel (where I hear they were demanding unheard-of prices from strangers, and charging them five guineas for leave to pass the night on a hob, with the run of the fender for a dressing-room), and some naval officers whom Lady de Gules ordered up for our service—her brother, you know, is a Lord of Admiralty—escorted us through the dockyard, and had a boat waiting at the stairs to take us to a great steamship lying in the harbour. Now, I should like to know why the wives of Parliament could not have had this very ship. There was plenty of room, nothing could be nicer. We had an awning over us, and the Captain ordered one of the cannons to be taken in, so that we had the porthole for a window, and there we clustered, Lady de Gules having shawls and things put upon the cannon, and perching herself on the top. There were a few good people on board, but I rather think that at the last moment, when the Admiralty authorities found that they did not want the tickets, they flung them to the local folks, who came on board very fussy and angular—horrid men, all in black at ten in the morning, and women covered with jewellery, which one of the little middies said they bought cheap of the Jews in the High Street—it did look like it. However, they kept at a respectful distance, and sneered at one another. Some of the officers on board were very attentive, and if I wanted to marry a man in uniform, I would sooner have the sea-livery than the land. They are fresher, and much pleasanter to talk to than the hardened army men, and really think more of you than the other spoiled creatures do. It was quite delightful to see them fly about to make you comfortable, doing things the soldier-officers, as your dreadful child calls them, would faint at the idea of—except at Chobham, where I admit they behave very decently. I should think it was not impossible for a woman to get to like a sailor pretty well, if she saw nobody else.

"About the sight itself, my dear Loui, you had better ask somebody who understood it—your husband, perhaps, for he was in the *Bulldog*, which behaved dreadfully ill, breaking the line, or some fearful seawater crime. First, when the Queen came in her yellow yacht, the guns were fired, and then there was a long pause, while she visited the *Duke of Wellington*, a monster of a ship with, I think they said, eleven hundred and thirty-one guns, or tons, or something; but you must not take figures from me. Then we all went away in a sea-procession, which was very pretty, the great ships in long lines in the middle, hundreds of steamboats and thousands of yachts following in a miscellaneous crowd, the sun shining very brightly, and the sea as green as grass. Lady de Gules, like a goose, fancied herself sea-sick, which I believe she would do if a glass of salt-water were set upon her dressing-table; but we would not pity her, and she thought better of it. While we

were at lunch—at which the officers behaved with great devotion, and a disinterestedness remarkably unlike something you and I have seen—it seems that the fleet was cannonading an enemy, but I looked out of the window and could see nothing but smoke, so we stayed where we were.



"I send you a sketch of it from memory. *Entre nous*, I was not quite unprofitably engaged. I do not know whether it will come to anything, but just ask Augustus *from yourself*, whether the Shropshire branch of the Lartonbury family is the right one, and if he knows Henry Lartonbury. Swanby House, or Hall, or something, is, I think, the family place, but I have some idea that my Lartonburys don't live there. Until I know this, of course, I can say nothing, but it is a *strong case*, and he can wait with great safety. Be sure you ask Augustus, and write to me directly to Lady de Gules's.

"We came to town by a special train with lots of Members of Parliament. I could not see Augustus, my dear, but the others did not look so unhappy at being without their wives as you pathetically tell me he looked on leaving you. O you silly Louisa!

"I hope I have given you a full account of the day's proceedings, but the newspapers will tell you the rest—one of the writers was in the carriage with us—I had no idea they were such nice clean people, and he knew more than all the Members put together—there, don't look angry.

"Ever your affectionate,
"LAURA."

"Gules House, Saturday."

"P.S.—Be particular about the Shropshire branch, because there are some Hereford Lartonburys who won't do at all, and who ought to be made to change their name. Light hair, dark eyes, and a very affected manner, but not a bad style."

PUNCH'S NAVAL SONGSTER. 1844

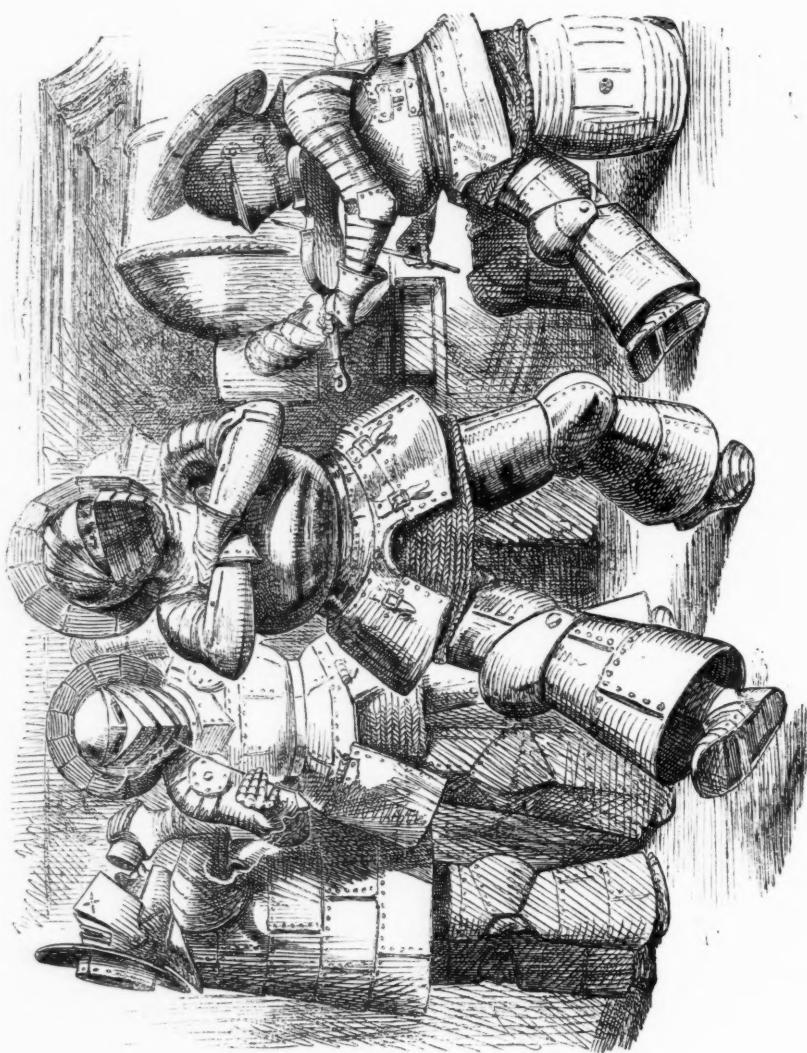
AFLOAT, ashore, ahead, astern,
With winds propitious or contrary,
(I do not spin an idle yarn,)
No—no, belay! I love thee, Mary.

Amidships—on the Bentinck shrouds,
Athwart the hawse, astride the mizen,
Watching at night the fleecy clouds,
Your Harry wishes you were his'n.

Then let us heave the nuptial lead,
In Hymen's port our anchors weighing;
Thy face shall be the figure-head
Our ship shall always be displaying.

But when old age shall bid us luff,
Our honest tack will never vary,
But I'll continue Harry Bluff,
And thou my little light-built Mary.

PUNCH AND THE NAVY.—NOVEMBER 29, 1939.



THE "BRITISH TAR" OF THE FUTURE.

1862

NOV

C
YE?
A
TAKE



A STAGGERER!

Custom-House Officer. "NOW, THEN, GOT ANYTHING CONTRABAND ABOUT YE?"

Mate. "GOT 'BOUT BOT'L AND HALF BRANDY; BUT I'LL DEFY YE TO TAKE IT FRO' ME!"

1873

MORE POWER TO PLIMSOLL.

1873

(AIR—"Poor Jack.")

HERE'S more power to Plimsoll, for Derby M.P.,
His pluck and his bottom I like,
That at rotten old ships, sent o'erloaded to sea,
Not too soon he's determined to strike.
With a cargo of rails in an old hull stowed tight,
And a deck-load, how pleasant to scud;
While loose bolts, leaky seams, Father Neptune
invite,
And the pumps fight in vain with the flood.
Let horrified shipowners never so oft,
His charges, indignant, fling back,
I call him the Cherub who sits up aloft,
To keep watch for the life of Poor Jack!

We've heard Reed and his rivals, this many a day,
Discussing builds, riggings, and such,
On flotation, stability, jabb'ring away,
In what sounds to landsmen High Dutch.
But whatever the ship of the future may be—
What a ship *that* will be, when it's seen!—
The ship of the past (hear a voice from the sea!)
Too often a coffin has been.
So says Plimsoll, says he, though our tars aren't
so soft
At sea-risks to be taken aback,
There's room for a Cherub to sit up aloft,
And keep watch for the life of Poor Jack!

FROZEN OUT SAILORS. 1862

Now that floating iron shot-towers are to constitute our fleet, and apparently there soon will be no ships used in our service, there comes the question what our naval sailors are to do to get a living, for it is clear that they will soon be no more wanted in the Navy. When there are no more ships to sail, there can be no more need of sailors; and as for paying able seamen to man a fleet of flat-irons with neither masts nor spars, this would be no less a waste of wages than an insult to our tars. Steam is bad enough in the opinion of old salts, and doubtless many a strong adjective has been hurled upon the heads of the lubbers who invented it. But though steam in a great measure has superseded sails, in the Navy it has mostly been used as an auxiliary; and until such floating forts as the *Merrimac* were thought of, the Navy still had ships, and although they had steam-engines in them they had also masts and sails. Now, however, if the cupolas succeed, the Navy will consist of shot-towers, not ships: and our sailors must look out for other means of livelihood, as their naval occupation will of course be at an end. As for getting them to serve on board of "them blanked flat-irons," that will certainly be hopeless, and indeed it were a waste of money if we could, for to do mere stoker's work one does not want a skiff sailor. We can fancy the disgust with which a man-o'-war's man, one of the old school, would hear that he was wanted to serve on board a cupola! We should think he would as lief be clapped in irons out and out, as be stewed up in an iron barge without a sail to reef, or a rope to handle.

When our sailors leave the Navy then, what is to become of them? We cannot have a lot of strong-limbed lusty fellows going about the streets in gangs and bellowing "Got no work to do-o-o!" like frozen-out market-gardeners. Clearly some plan must be hit upon to make use of their muscle, and the sooner we begin to think of one the better. It would be grievous to see sailors driven to drive cabs, or coming out as bus-conductors. Yet doubtless this too many of them will be forced to do, unless timely steps be taken to provide them with employment. We quite expect if we live long enough to hear a "What cheer, mess-mate!" interchanged between two bus-drivers, or else to hear a Hansom cabman, stopped by a big mountain of a piled up Pickford's van, cry out, "Now then, you lubber, heave ahead with your three-decker!"

Underwriters at Lloyd's, now their risks wax so high,

Are beginning cantank'rous to be,
As with undertakers they don't want to vie

For performing of fun'rals at sea.

The cost of your cargo, as well as your hull,

"Tis but safe to insure,—if no more—

And if weather is bad, and nights dark, and freights dull,

Of course there'll be wrecks to deplore.

What then? All's a hazard: Compunction is soft:

Suppose a few tars ne'er come back!—

Leave them to the Cherub that sits up aloft

To keep watch for the life of Poor Jack!

Hearts of oak in old times were our ships, every inch,

And our men the same stuff as the ship:

But now from the cost of live oak builders flinch—

The point is to make a cheap trip.

And as cheap trips on shore in a smash often end,

Thanks to old engines, axles, or springs,

So your cheap trips at sea oft to Davy

Jones send

All but what grist to shipowners
brings.

Well, as life's breath is not like a coat
to be doft,

Which owners, when lost, can give back,

I say, more power to Plimsoll, who sits up aloft,

To keep watch for the life of Poor Jack!



PUNCH AND THE NAVY.—NOVEMBER 29, 1939.



THE "UGLY DUCKLING."

NEPTUNE. "WELL, OF ALL THE HIDEOUS—!"
BRITANNIA. "AH, SHE ISN'T PRETTY, CERTAINLY; BUT REMEMBER, FATHER NEP, HANDSOME IS THAT HANDSOME DOES!"

1873



Cheeky Passenger. "ANY FEAR O' MY DISTURBING THE MAGNETIC CURRENTS, CAPTAIN, BY GOIN' NEAR THE COMPASS?"
Captain. "OH, NO, SIR. BRASS HAS NO EFFECT ON IT WHATEVER, SIR!"

1883

PUNCH'S NAVAL SIGNAL CODE.

1875

(For the Use of Ironclads.)

Distinguishing Pennant.	Number.	Signal.
Red	27,423	Great fun.
"	2	Immense joke.
"	4	We are sinking.
"	578	Got no ammunition on board.
"	1	The Captain is asleep.
17,865		First Lieutenant is playing on the piano.
"	4,809	First Lieutenant just taken G sharp.
"	43	The Second Lieutenant is smoking in the empty powder-magazine.
"	783	The Midshipmen are skating on wheels on the Quarter-deck.
"	18,405	The Navigating Lieutenant is reading a novel.
"	4	The Crew have just heard that we are sinking.
White	1	The Crew are putting on their new clothes to sink in.
"	3	The Captain is waking up.
"	49,076	The Captain is awake.
"	2	We have carried away three anchors.
Blue	1	The pumps won't work.
"	2	We are getting into the boats.
"	74,899	We are trying to save the ship.
"	3	All the water-tight compartments are open.
"	4,609	We shall have time to dine comfortably before the ship goes down.
"	99,999	We are returning from the boats.
"	88,743	We are trying to plug up a hole in the side of the vessel.
"	4	We are resigned to our fate.
"	2	We shall not have any amateur theatricals to-night in consequence of the disaster.

Distinguishing Pennant.	Number.	Signal.
Black	4	This sinking is putting out all our arrangements.
"	7	The Captain is much annoyed.
"	8	So is the First Lieutenant.
"	9	So is the Navigating Lieutenant.
"	25	So are the Sub-Lieutenants and Naval Cadets.
"	49,760	We are in deep water.
"	99,876	The engines are at work.
"	3	Fires in the engine-room gone out.
"	1	Can you help us?
"	5	We are leaving the ship.
"	10	Order dinner for us on shore.
Green	1	The ship has sunk.

THE "VOLTA."

1886

NEW NAUTICAL SONG.

[The Volta, a launch driven by Electricity, has just successfully crossed the Channel.]

OH, she is a gallant boat.
Sing a dy-na-mo!
 Quite the rummiest craft afloat.
Sing a dy-na-mo!
 She is strong as is the eagle,
 And as swift as any beagle,
 And the fo'e she will inveigle,
Sing a dy-na-mo!

She can go across the sea,
Sing a dy-na-mo!
 Worked by Electricitee,
Sing a dy-na-mo!
 And they say she's a first-rater,
 Though I can't explain the natur,
 Of that there accumulator;
Sing a dy-na-mo!



"A MESSAGE FROM THE SEA."

FATHER NEPTUNE. "LOOK HERE, JOHN, THERE'S A JOLLY SIGHT O' THEM FURRIN' CRAFT ABOUT. TAKE A TIP FROM YOUR OLD FRIEND—BUILD ALL YOU KNOW—AND DASH THE EXPENSE!"

1893



Bluejacket (in charge of Party of Sightseers). "HERE NELSON FELL."
Old Lady. "AN' I DON'T WONDER AT IT, POOR DEAR. NASTY SLIPPERY PLACE! I NEARLY FELL THERE MYSELF."

1899

DIARY ON BOARD A SUBMARINER.
1901

(Prophetic and Probable.)

Monday.—Think we are going fairly well. Not quite sure of our bearings. Still, should be somewhere near Southend. Rise to the surface. Why, here we are at Plymouth!

Tuesday.—Bad weather, so lie low. Still we are making progress. Can't see a yard in front of one. Fish seem to me of French appearance. Hope we are not losing our way.

Wednesday.—Still bad weather. Compressed air still holding out. Can't rise to

the surface. Chinese-looking fish. Well, might go to a worse place than Hong Kong.

Thursday.—Must be not very far from New York—or Sydney Harbour. Never quite sure in these vessels where one gets to. Still disagreeable weather. Can't get to surface.

Friday.—Very cold indeed. Fancy we must be nearing the North Pole, or can it be Scarborough?

Saturday.—The Cape at last. Now for a rush, and we find ourselves landed in St. Paul's Church Yard! Who would have thought it! Well, we are all right for Sunday!

THE SONG OF THE SUB-MARINED.
1901

A LIFE 'neath the ocean wave
 A home in the rolling deep,
 That the billows never lave
 Though the currents never sleep.
 Where the whiting come and tap
 On the porthole's misty pane
 And the congers bark and snap
 In a dog-fishlike refrain.

A life 'mid the flowing tide,
 A home in the sunless sea
 In a ship with a porpoise hide
 That ever concealed must be.
 A perpetual game of nap
 On the ocean's ill-made bed;
 There one's feet get soft as pap
 Where the sole alone may tread.

Oh, well for the collier lad
 As he curses his garb of grime!
 Oh, well for the man nigh mad
 With the heat in a torrid clime!
 Oh, well for the dark Lascar
 In the sea of ice or snow!
 But alas! without sun or moon or star,
 For the mariner down below!

A DIALOGUE AT THE NAVAL
MANOEUVRES. 1901

Special (deferentially). Beg pardon, Sir, but will you please pass my despatch?

Censor (graciously). Fire away, and I will tell you when to stop.

Special (reading). "The torpedo boats are—"

Censor (interrupting). Oh, you had better not say anything about them.

Special (after using blue pencil). "The torpedo-catchers then—"

Censor (as before). Oh, we can't have anything about them. Cut again, please.

Special (annoyed). Very well, Sir. "The protecting fleet turn—"

Censor (interrupting). Oh, I say, you mustn't say anything about the protecting fleet.

Special (vexed). Very well, Sir. "The attacking fleet at this juncture—"

Censor (remonstrating). Oh, I say, you really mustn't refer to the attacking fleet. Look here. I daresay you have summed up the situation in your last sentence. What is it?

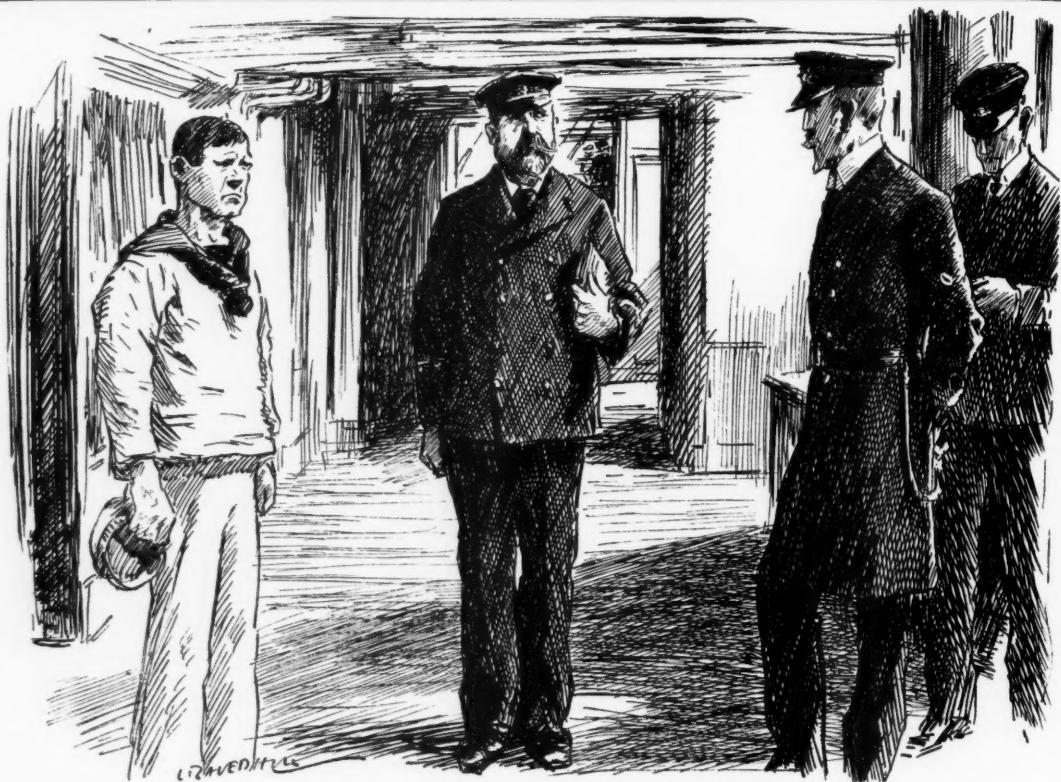
Special. "Everyone concerned is all at sea."

Censor. Capital! We are all at sea!

Special (to himself). Yes, and likely to continue so—until criticised!

[Scene closes in upon an ocean fog.





Commander. "WHAT'S HIS CHARACTER APART FROM THIS LEAVE-BREAKING?"

Petty Officer. "WELL, SIR, THIS MAN 'E GOES ASHORE WHEN 'E LIKES; 'E COMES OFF WHEN 'E LIKES; 'E USES 'ORRIBLE LANGUAGE WHEN 'E'S SPOKEN TO; IN FACT, FROM 'IS GENERAL BE'AVOUR 'E MIGHT BE A ORFICER!"

THE PILOT OF THE SHANNON.

1907

The mighty Micky McBride
Was working her out to sea:
Pride of the Shannon-side,
And prince of the pilots, he.

There came a little chap
Of the peery-query school,
With his ears in the flap of his cap,
And an eyeglass and a stool.

He looked at the rising mist,
And he looked at the lowering sky,
And he blew on his fist and hissed,
And he cocked his eye awry.

He eyed McBride in his pride,
As he shred the shag in his bowl,
And he lurched to his side, astride,
To talk with a hero-soul.

"Each rip of a rock," said he,
And he handed Mick a light,
"To old Kilkae and the sea,—
You know it by day and night?"

The pilot shaded the light,
And he puffed till the bowl was red:
"By day and by night—you're right—
Teetotal or tight," he said.

There came a knock and a shock,
And the passengers rushed from bed:

"Ay, every rock o' the flock:
We're on wan o' thim now," he said.

SHIPS THAT (SUR)PASS. 1907

The superiority in dimension over its predecessors which is a feature of the *Lusitania*, and which characterises nearly every new liner constructed, makes one hesitate to reject the possibility that some day our Shipping Intelligence will include such items as the following:—

We have received an interesting volume, *Day Tours on the Nervtonic*, giving particulars of the many delightful walks which are offered to practised pedestrians by the latest addition to the White Star line of ocean greyhounds.

(By Marconigraph.)

The opening foursome over the links laid on the upper deck of the new Cunarder *Encyclopaedia* was begun to-day just after leaving Queenstown, Herd and Massy opposing Braid and Taylor.

The course is only a nine-hole one, but is thoroughly sporting, the water hazards being particularly difficult of negotiation. From the first tee Braid was bunkered in the engine-room, but playing out Taylor managed to halve. Approaching the second, Massy got into difficulties, a sudden roll of the boat making him pull his shot down the funnel of a passing tug. (*Proceeding*.)

Motorists will be glad to learn that a fine macadam surface has been laid on the lower deck of the new White Star liner *Pneumatic*, enabling passengers to make half-day excursions to some of the most beautiful and interesting parts of the vessel, including the anchor, the engine-room, and other places of interest.

The White Star Line announce the maiden voyage of R.M.S. *Epic*, from Southampton, on Wednesday, October 1. The streets throughout the vessel are lighted by electricity, while motor buses run between the dining saloon and principal cabins.

The company's coaches meet all passengers at the gangway, and convey them to their cabins free of all charge.

1911



FROM OUR SPECIALLY CREDULOUS CORRESPONDENT.

1914

Stoker. "I SEE THE TORPEDO APPROACHIN' US; SO, WITHOUT WAITIN' FOR ANY ORDERS, I DIVES OVERBOARD. JUST GIVES 'IM A FLICK ON 'IS LITTLE RUDDER, AN' OFF 'E GOES TO STARBD AN' PASSES US 'ARMLESSLY BY."

THE OLD SEA-ROVER SPEAKS.

1914

[Referring to our victory off the Falkland Islands, the *Tägliche Rundschau* remarks: "On board our North Sea ships our sailors will clench their teeth and all hearts will burn with the feeling, 'England the enemy! Up and at the enemy!' The gallant bombardment of defenceless towns on our East Coast would appear to be the immediate outcome of this intelligent attitude.]

BEHIND your lock-gates stowed away,
Out of the great tides' ebb and flow,
How could you guess, this many a day,
Who was your leading naval foe?
But now you learn, a little late—
So loud the rumours from the sea grow—
England's the thing you have to hate,
And not (for instance) Montenegro.

The facts are just as you've been told;
Further disguise would be but vain;
We have a *penchant* from of old
For being masters on the main;

It is a custom which we caught
From certain sea-kings who begat us,
And that is why we like the thought
That you propose to "up and at" us.

Come where you will—the seas are wide;
And choose your Day—they're all alike;
You'll find us ready where we ride
In calm or storm and wait to strike;
But—if of shame your shameless Huns
Can yet retrieve some casual traces—
Please fight our men and ships and guns,
Not women-folk and watering-places. O. S.



A NORTH SEA CHANTEY.

(*To the tune of "Tipperary."*)

JACK. "IT'S A LONG, LONG WAIT FOR WILLIAM'S NAVY,
BUT MY HEART'S RIGHT HERE."

1914



Torpedoed mine-sweeper (to his pal). "AS I WAS A-SAYIN', BOB, WHEN WE WAS INTERRUPTED, IT'S MY BELIEF AS 'OW THE SUBMARINE BLOKES AIN'T ON 'ARF AS RISKY A JOB AS THE BOYS IN THE AIRY-O-PLANES." 1917

THE LITTLE SHIPS. 1916

[The small steamer — struck a mine yesterday and sank. The crew perished.] —
Daily Paper.

WHO to the deep in ships go down
Great marvels do behold,
But comes the day when some must drown
In the grey sea and cold.
For galleons lost great bells do toll,
But now must we implore
God's ear for sunken Little Ships
Who are not heard of more.

When ships of war put out to sea
They go with guns and mail,
That so the chance may equal be
Should foemen them assail;
But Little Ships men's errands run
And are not clad for strife;
God's mercy then on Little Ships
Who cannot fight for life.

To warm and cure, to clothe and feed
They stoutly put to sea,
And since that men of them had need
Made light of jeopardy;
Each in her hour her fate did meet
Nor flinched nor made outcry;
God's love be with these Little Ships
Who could not choose but die.

To friar and nun, and every one
Who lives to save and tend,
Sisters were these whose work is done
And cometh thus to end;

Full well they knew what risk they ran

But still were strong to give;
God's grace for all the Little Ships
Who died that men might live.

THE NORTH SEA GROUND. 1915

OH, Grimsby is a pleasant town as any man may find,
An' Grimsby wives are thrifty wives,
an' Grimsby girls are kind,
An' Grimsby lads were never yet the lads to lag behind
When there's men's work doin' on the North Sea ground.

An' it's "Wake up, Johnnie!" for the high tide's flowin',
An' off the misty waters a cold wind blowin';
Skipper's come aboard, an' it's time that we were goin',
An' there's fine fish waitin' on the North Sea ground.

Soles in the Silver Pit—an' there we'll let 'em lie;
Cod on the Dogger—oh, we'll fetch 'em by-an'-by;
War on the water—an' it's time to serve an' die,
For there's wild work doin' on the North Sea ground.

An' it's "Wake up, Johnnie!" they want you at the trawlin'
(With your long sea-boots and your tarry old tarpaulin');

All across the bitter seas duty comes a-callin'
In the Winter's weather off the North Sea ground.

It's well we've learned to laugh at fear
—the sea has taught us how;
It's well we've shaken hands with death—we'll not be strangers now,
With death in every climbin' wave before the trawler's bow,
An' the black spawn swimmin' on the North Sea ground.

Good luck to all our fightin' ships that rule the English sea;
Good luck to our brave merchantmen wherever they may be;
The sea it is their highway, an' we've got to sweep it free
For the ships passin' over on the North Sea ground.

An' it's "Wake up, Johnnie!" for the sea wind's cryin';
"Time an' time to go where the herrin' gulls are flyin';"
An' down below the stormy seas the dead men lyin',
Oh, the dead lyin' quiet on the North Sea ground!



THE SWEEPERS OF THE SEA.

MR. PUNCH. "RISKY WORK, ISN'T IT?"

TRAWLER SKIPPER. "THAT'S WHY THERE'S A HUNDRED THOUSAND
OF US DOING IT."

NAUTICAL TERMS FOR ALL.

1916

(By our Tame Naval Expert.)



It is really surprising what confusion exists in the public mind upon the exact significance of such elementary terms as "Command of the Sea," and "A Fleet in Being." Only yesterday evening I was asked by a fellow-traveller on the top of a bus why, if we had command of the sea, we didn't blow up the Kiel Canal!

It will be as well to begin at the beginning. What is Naval Warfare? It is an endeavour by sea-going belligerent units, impregnated (for the time being) with a measure of *animus pugnandi* and furnished with offensive weapons, to impose their will upon one another. In rather more technical language it may be described as fighting in ships.

Now in order to utilise the sea for one's own purposes and at the same time to deny, proscribe, refuse and restrict it to one's enemy it is essential to obtain COMMAND. And it must not be overlooked that Command of the Sea can only be established in one way—by utilising or threatening to utilise sea-going belligerent units. But we must distinguish between Command of the Sea and Sea Supremacy, and again between Potential Command, Putative Command and Absolute Command. Finally let there be no confusion between the expressions "Command of the Sea" and "Control of the Sea," which are entirely different things—though both rest securely upon the doctrine of the Fleet in Being, which is at the foundation of all true strategy.

This brings us to the question of what is meant by the phrase "A Fleet in Being." "To Be or Not to Be" (in Being) is a phrase that has been woefully misinterpreted, especially by those who insist on a distinction between Being and Doing. There is no such distinction at sea. For a fleet to exist as a recognisable instrument is not necessarily for it to be in Being. Only by exhibiting a desire to dispute Command at all costs can a fleet be said to come into Being. On the other hand, by being in Being a fleet does not necessarily obtain command or even partial control. This is not simply a question of To Be or Not to Be (in Being).

In explaining these academic principles one always runs the risk of being confronted with concrete instances. I shall be asked, "Is the German Fleet in Being?" I can only reply that it is in a condition of strictly Limited Control (I refer to the Kiel Canal), while the Baltic is in Disputed Command so long as the Russian Fleet is Strategically at Large.

This brings us to the question of the phrase "Strategically at Large," which has been loosely rendered "On the War-path." Let us say rather that any fleet (in Being) which is ready (even without Putative Control) to dispute Command is said to be Strategically at Large, so long as it is imbued with *animus pugnandi*.

Animus pugnandi is the root of the matter. A fleet is in a state of disintegration without it. And so long as the German Fleet's activities in the North Sea are confined to peeping out of the Canal to see if the foe is in the neighbourhood one must conclude that this ingredient has been overlooked in its composition.

BIS.

"LIGHT CRUISERS (OLD)." 1915

(Vide Naval Expert's Classification.)

WHEN you've marshalled your navies and gloried
your fill

In the latest they show of invention and skill,
The lion in strength and the lizard in speed,
The watchful in waiting, the present in need,
The great Super-Dreadnaughts gigantic and grim,
The thirty-knot cruisers both subtle and slim,
The weight and the range of each wonderful gun—
Remember the cruisers, the out-of-date cruisers,
The creaky old cruisers whose day is not done,
Built some time before Nineteen-hundred-and-one.

You may look to the South, you may seek in the
North,

You may search from the Falklands as far as the
Forth—

From Pole unto Pole all the oceans between,
Patrolling, protecting, unwearied, unseen,
By night or by noonday the Navy is there,
And the out-of-date cruisers are doing their share!
Yes, anywhere, everywhere, under the sun
You will find an old cruiser, an off-the-map
cruiser,
An out-of-date cruiser whose work's never done,
Built some time before Nineteen-hundred-and-one.

It may be you'll meet with her lending a hand
In clearing a way for the soldiers to land—
Escorting an army, and feeding it too,
Or sinking a raider (and saving her crew),
Blockading by sea or attacking by dry land,
Bombarding a coast or annexing an island;
Where there's death to be daring or risk to be run
You may look for the cruiser, the out-of-date
cruiser,

The creaky old cruiser that harries the Hun
(Built some time before Nineteen-hundred-and-one).

In wild nights of Winter, when warmly you sleep,
She is plugging her way through the dark and the
deep,

With death in the billows which endless do roll,
And the wind blowing cold with the kiss of the
Pole,

While seas slopping over both frequent and green
Call forth on occasion expressions of spleen.
Of all the old kettles award we the bun
To the out-of-date cruiser, the obsolete cruiser,
The creaky old cruiser whose work's never done,
Built some time before Nineteen-hundred-and-one.

And when the Day breaks for whose smoke-trail
afar

We scan the grey waters by sunlight and star,
The day of great glory—the splendour, the gloom,
The lightning, the thunder, the judgment, the
doom,

The breaking of navies, the shaking of kings,
When the Angel of Battle makes night with his
wings . . .

Oh, somewhere, be sure, in the thick o' the fun
You will find an old cruiser, a gallant old cruiser,
A creaky old cruiser whose day is not done,
Built some time before Nineteen-hundred-and-one.



DRAKE'S WAY.

ZEEBRUGGE. ST. GEORGE'S DAY, 1918.

ADMIRAL DRAKE (*to Admiral Keefes*). "BRAVO, SIR! TRADITION HOLDS. MY MEN SINGED A KING'S BEARD, AND YOURS HAVE SINGED A KAISER'S MOUSTACHES."

1918

WITH THE AUXILIARY PATROL.

1918

THE SURGEON-PROBATIONER.

THE Surgeon-Probationer was very young indeed, and our trawler was his first ship; but if he lacked the sagacity of experience he fully made up for it by his great enthusiasm. He had an eager look.

"I don't like it," said the Second Engineer. "I'd feel ever so much happier if that case o' knives and forks he makes such a fuss about was washed overboard some night. I should sleep easier."

It so chanced that just at this time there was an unprecedented epidemic of good health among the trawler crews in our area. The ship's dog had been getting into bad company ashore, but a timely application of insecticide prevented any further spread of infection. It almost seemed as though people refrained from going sick on purpose.

All this was a bitter disappointment to the Surgeon-Probationer. He would scan our faces anxiously each morning, but we couldn't summon up a symptom between us.

The real trouble began when old Bill, the Mate, refused a third helping of the steward's plumduff at Sunday dinner-time. I remember seeing the look that came over the gunner's face one day when a German submarine came to the surface within a hundred yards of us. The S.-P.'s expression reminded me of it somehow.

"Are you feeling unwell, Bill?" he asked sharply.

"Eh, me? Bless you, Sir, I'm champion," replied Bill hastily. "Ere, steward, pass me over the rest o' that duff, quick."

"Wait," commanded the S.-P., "you're looking pale; sure you feel quite yourself—no lassitude or disinclination to work?"

Bill, a stalwart sailor weighing well over sixteen stones and bearded like a pard, passed his hand nervously over his anatomy.

"No, Sir, I think I'm all right," he said.

"Let me look at your tongue," ordered the S.-P.

Bill a little shyly exhibited the member in request.

"Oh, wot an 'orrible sight!" exclaimed the Second.

"Very interesting," observed the Surgeon-Probationer critically.

"Put it away at once, Bill," said the Second, "before someone slips on it and hurts himself."

"You 'old yer row," snapped Bill savagely.

But he was obviously disquieted. All the afternoon he wore a worried look and several times I observed him trying to feel his pulse. By tea-time he was thoroughly ill and refused the steward's most tempting delicacies. The S.-P. began to get quite excited about it.

"I feel mighty queer, Sir," Bill confessed; "I seem as though something was a-goin' to happen to me."

"Ah," breathed the S.-P., "I feared as much. Where does it seem to catch you the most?"

"Can't say exactly, Sir," replied Bill miserably, "but

I feel empty, like as if I'd been scuttled a'most. Can you do anything for me, Sir?"

The Surgeon-Probationer took his coat off and, after a quarter of an hour's whirlwind fighting, made his diagnosis. It was either nervous breakdown or appendicitis; he leaned rather to the latter view as offering the greater scope for surgical skill. Bill, reduced to a mental and physical wreck, was tucked up in his bunk and made to drink evil-looking concoctions from the medicine chest. The Second Engineer said he wouldn't give ninepence for the Mate's chance of seeing another breakfast served.

But Bill was still with us when Monday morning dawned, though he had weakened palpably during the night and had given up all hope of recovery.

"I'm afraid it'll mean an operation," said the S.-P., trying to keep the eagerness out of his voice; "it's the knife or nothing—your one chance, Bill."

"Oh, oh!" groaned Bill, burying his face in the blankets, "tell 'em ashore as I went down with flags flying. Good-bye, Second; I forgive you all your evil goin's on and hope you won't be punished for 'em as they deserves. Good-bye, Joe; don't forget to oil the winch when I'm gone West."

"Any last request, Bill?" asked the Skipper.

"Yes, Skips; see that there's no splinters in the plank when you drop me astern; an' if the 'Uns comes out, boys, g-give 'em 'ell."

Then, while the S.-P. was poised his knife for the fatal stroke, I burst into the cabin, waving a signal-pad above my head. The news of the armistice had just come through from the base.

In the excitement consequent on this momentous announcement poor Bill was completely forgotten. We crowded up on deck, hoisting

every flag we carried and watching the ridiculous behaviour of the other trawlers who had utterly lost their helms and were rolling and leaping about like a lot of motor-launches in the stern wave of a destroyer. The S.-P. was the first to recollect the urgent business that awaited him below.

"I must go and get on with the operation," he said.

"Excuse me, Sir," remarked the Third Hand, "but Bill seems to have took a turn for the better by the looks of 'm."

Following the direction of his up-raised finger we beheld the figure of the lately moribund Mate standing, semi-clothed, on the top of the wheel-house, shouting himself hoarse and waving tangled lengths of linen bandages wildly in the breeze.

"'Ooray," he was yelling, "'oo-bloomin'-ray for peace and no early closin'!'"

"It almost looks as though an immediate operation might not be necessary after all," observed the Lieutenant drily.

And the Surgeon-Probationer took his disappointment like a man.



Sailor (rebuking pessimist). "O' COURSE SOME O' THEM U-BOATS GETS AWAY. WOT D' YER THINK WE 'UNT 'EM WITH? FILTERS?"

1917

THE VOYAGE OF H.M.S. "PRESIDENT."

1918

A DREAM.

[Mr. Punch means no disrespect to H.M.S. *President*, which, being moored in the Thames off Bouverie Street, he has always looked upon as his guardship, but he has often wondered what would happen if only a few thousands of the officers and men borne on her books were to issue from the Admiralty and elsewhere—but especially from the Admiralty—and go on board their ship; hence the disquieting dream that follows.]

IT was eighteen bells in the larboard watch with a neap-tide running free,
And a gale blew out of the Ludgate Hills when the *President* put to sea;
An old mule came down Bouverie Street to give her a helping hand,
And I didn't think much of the ship as such, but the crew was something grand.

The bo'sun stood on a Hoxton bus and blew the Luncheon Call,
And the ship's crew came from the four wide winds, but chiefly from Whitehall;
They came like the sand on a wind-swept strand, like shots from a Maxim gun,
And the old mule stood with the tow-rope on and said, "It can't be done."

With a glitter of wiggly braid they came, with a clatter of forms and files,
The little A.P.'s they swarmed like bees, the Commodores stretched for miles:
Post-Captains came with hats in flame, and Admirals by the ell,
And which of the lot was the biggest pot there was never a man could tell.

They choked the staggering quarter-deck and did the thing no good;
They hung like tars on the mizzen-spars (or those of the crowd that could);
Far out of view still streamed the queue when the moke said, "Well I'm blowed
If I'll compete with the 'ole damn Fleet," and he pushed off down the road.

And the great ship she sailed after him, though the Lord knows how she did,
With her gunwales getting a terrible wetting and a brace of her stern sheets hid.
When up and spoke a sailor-bloke and he said, "It strikes me queer,
And I've sailed the sea in the R.N.V. this five-and-forty year;

"But a ship as can't 'old 'arf 'er crew, why, what sort of a ship is 'er?
And oo's in charge of the pore old barge if dangers do occur?
And I says to you, I says, 'Eave to, until this point's agreed';"
And some said, "Why?" and the rest, "Ay, ay," but the mule he paid no heed.

So the old beast hauled and the Admirals bawled and the crew they fought like cats,
And the ship went dropping along past Wapping and down by the Plumstead Flats;
But the rest of the horde that wasn't aboard they trotted along the bank,
Or jumped like frogs from the Isle of Dogs, or fell in the stream and sank.

But while they went by the coast of Kent up spoke an aged tar—
"A joke's a joke, but this 'ere moke is going a bit too far;
I can tell by the motion we're nearing the ocean—and that's too far for me;"
But just as he spoke the tow-rope broke and the ship sailed out to sea.

And somewhere out on the deep, no doubt, they probe the problems through
Of who's in charge of the poor old barge and what they ought to do;
And the great files flash and the dockets crash and the ink-wells smoke like sin,
But many a U-boat tells the tale how the *President* did her in.

For many have tried to pierce her hide and flung torpedoes at her,
But the vessel, they found, was barraged round with a mile of paper matter;
The whole sea swarms with Office Forms and the U-boats stick like glue,
So nothing can touch the *President* much, for nothing at all gets through.

* * * * *

But never, alack, will the ship come back, for the *President* she's stuck too. A. P. H.



Blucjacket. "PULL YERSELF TOGETHER, 'ERBERT. WE LICKED ALL THE CHAMPAGNE OFF 'ER BOWS WHEN SHE WAS LAUNCHED."



THE EYES OF THE FLEET.

H. A. BATEMAN. 1919.

1919

NAVAL GADGETS. 1930

ONE of the great advantages of serving in a really modern ship is that it possesses a complete telephone system. Every office and most cabins have an instrument, and somewhere, tucked away in the bowels of the ship, there is an exchange and an operator.

It has often been a matter for speculation what are the principles upon which telephone operators are selected ashore. On board, however, the matter is not in doubt for one moment. Suppose, for instance, that an operator is to be detailed from the Foretop Division, it is not to be expected that Lieutenant Blank, the officer in charge of that division, is going to detail Able Seaman A (who is his most efficient deck-scrubber and most zealous brightwork-polisher), nor yet Able Seaman B (who is the mainstay of the divisional office) for a job which will mean that he is never going to see them again. No; what he does do is to walk along the ranks of his division until he spots Ordinary Seaman C, whose lack of forehead, gaping mouth and general vacuity of expression indicate an almost total absence of grey matter, and that man will be detailed for telephone operator. If he happens to suffer from adenoids and an impediment in his speech as well, those are of course additional natural qualifications for the post.

In spite of this it does sometimes happen that one establishes telephonic communication with the person one wants to talk to. After all there are only about one-hundred-and-fifty numbers on the switchboard; so the sea-going operator has not the infinite variety of wrong numbers to choose from that his brother (or sister) ashore has. In consequence, by the law of chances, he is bound to hit the right number sometimes.

Besides, one gets accustomed with experience to discovering immediately to what part of the ship one has actually been connected without waiting for a reply. For instance, you ask for the Ward-Room Ante-Room, wishing to speak to a messmate. If you hear "BXQ 'oist. 'And me a long pad. Where's that — boy?" you've got the Signal Bridge. If you get a musical fragment by a high-powered male-choir, it's the Stokers' Mess Deck. And should you hear nothing but rhythmic snores it's a pound to a button that you are on to the Chaplain's Cabin. In any of which cases you can ring off at once, moisten the lips and start afresh.

It is no good getting angry and abusing the operator. He wins every time.

The Naval telephone instrument, you see, is not fitted with a bell, but with a very powerful buzzer—the sort of thing that they let fly in factories at noon to remind the workmen of their lunch-pails. The practical-joke department of the Admiralty has fitted the buzzer in the earpiece of the instrument, and this constitutes the operator's chance of revenge. You call him a useless ullaage; he performs on the buzzer and you wake up in the sick-bay with a severe concussion and a perforated eardrum.

On the rare occasions when the ship lies alongside a dockyard they connect our telephone up with the shore exchange, the theory being that you can then ring up any part of the ship from the town and vice-versa. This facility was recently the undoing of Lieutenant Dash.

Lieutenant Dash is a very keen student of the theatrical art as represented by the local music-halls. This means that he often does not return to the ship at night until after the ward-room bar has closed. In order to avoid the resulting dearth of refreshment he has for long been in the habit of ordering a whisky-and-soda and sandwiches to be placed in his cabin to await his return, a proceeding which is contrary to the law and the prophets.

A few nights ago he went ashore as usual and it was not until he was well into the town that it struck him that he had forgotten to give his customary order to the steward. He bethought himself of the telephone, rang up the ship and asked for the ward-room pantry. The line was bad and he could hear little, but, as soon as he was sure that



"EXCUSE ME, SIR, IT'S ALL WRONG
TO DO UP THE BOTTOM BUTTON OF THE
WAISTCOAT."

someone had answered, he roared out, "Lieutenant Dash speaking. Put a whisky-and-soda and some sandwiches in my cabin before you close the bar." He repeated this twice, hung up and went on his way rejoicing.

When he got to his cabin that night there were the sandwiches and there was the whisky. It struck him as a little peculiar that the plate was of the very recognisable fluted pattern which is not supplied to ward-rooms but only to captains. That fact sank in slowly, but he did not fully realise the situation until he noticed a folded chit on the top of the whisky-glass. This he opened and read:—

"The Commanding Officer presents his compliments to Lieutenant Dash and hopes he will enjoy his supper. The Commanding Officer further hopes that he and Lieutenant Dash will have an early opportunity of discussing their apparently varying interpretations of the exact meaning of Article 107842 of the King's Regulations and Admiralty Instructions."

BILL'S ENEMY. 1925

"THERE'S a bloke I sometimes want to kick the worst way in the world," Said Bill, while from his short black pipe the dog-watch smoke-wreaths curled;

"E's a decent kind o' blighter, an' 'e mostly means me well,
But the 'arm that feller's done me it'd take a week to tell.

"E spends my 'ard-earned cash on beer an' wine an' fancy gals,
'E gets me fightin' with the cops an' scrappin' with my pals;
'E takes an' pawns my sea-chest when 'e's been and burned my pay,
An' I've never got the bloomin' guts to up an' say 'im nay.

"E's lost me every chanst I've 'ad o' gettin' on in life;
If it 'adn't been for 'im I'd 'ave a public an' a wife;
I've run my ship along of 'im an' wished I 'adn't after—
Cut off my nose to spite my face, an' what could you 'ave dafter?

"There ain't no other chap alive I'd stand it from," said Bill,
"But we've allus sailed together an' I guess we allus will;
'E's a sort o' blessed inkybus or Old Man o' the Sea,
An' there ain't no shakin' of 'im off—
For why? Because 'e's me!"

C. F. S.

"FOOLS RUSH IN..." 1931

Able-Seaman Martin sat on a mess-stool with his legs thrust out in front of him and surveyed life dismally.

"What's up, Pincher?" asked a messmate with that faint suggestion of hope of the worst that only a blue-jacket can impart to so ordinary a question.

"Oo was it," said Pincher sepulchrally, "oo said that a bloke what didn't make mistakes never made nothing?"

"Either Shakespeare or Lord Nelson, I expect. Why?"

"Well, the Bloke don't seem to recognise the truth of it anyway."

"Best tell me and get it orf yer chest whatever it is," urged the messmate.

Pincher kicked an unoffending mess-tub savagely.

"What's the good," he said, "of tryin' to keep free of crime when Fate's agin yer? Two year ago, when we first commissions, I spilled a pot o' paint on the quarter-deck, an' that was on account of a Joey treadin' on me unexpected."

"Was that your last crime, then?"

"It was. I've run the 'ole bloomin' commission as pure as the driven what-not an' then this 'appens at the final Admiral's inspection."

"What 'appens?"

"Well, I'm telling you, ain't I?"

"You may think you are, old cock, but you aren't. I make doo allowance for the depressed state of your mind, but I wish you'd get on with it. I'm duty boat's crew, and I should 'ate to miss anything."

"Well, I'm in the Commander's report—so there!"

"Wha-for?"

"Speakin' out of me turn."

"Go on!"

"Fact."

"Tell us."

"Well, I was detailed for Captain's messenger. When the barge shoves orf from the Flagboat, the Owner 'e says sort of voce to the Bloke, 'Ave a look at 'im through your glass, Commander, and see what the port-ents are.'"

"The port what?"

"The 'portents,' yer fat'ead. French for whether the Admiral looked as if 'e'd got a liver that mornin'."

"Ah! I get you."

"So the Bloke ups with 'is glass an' as a squint. 'I think, Sir,' 'e says, 'that honourable hadvancement may be gained by the use of hextreme tac.' 'So be it,' says the Owner and readjusts 'is sword-belt as if girdin' up 'is loins for the fray."

"That's funny now. I saw the Admiral when 'e come over the side

and passed the remark 'ow docile 'e looked."

"Ah! yes, 'e started sweet as a nut. 'Good-mornin', Captain,' 'e says, when the band 'ad stopped the noise they makes for Admirals and the guard's rifles 'ad been chah-hoooed back to where they started from. 'Good-mornin', Sir,' says the Owner subordinate like.

"I 'ave chosen a fine day for my inspection of your ship," proceeds the Admiral."

"Meanin' a bit more'n what 'e said, I reckon."

"That's a fact. 'Yes, Sir,' replies the Captain, meanin' 'An' I 'ope you won't go an' do nothin' to mar the gifts o' nature.' Then she starts walkin' round the divisions."

"What was 'e saying to Tubby Jones in the quarterdeckmen?"

"'E wasn't sayin' nothing to 'im. 'E asked the orficer of the division what the man's name was."

"My word, 'e's 'ot stuff! But that was a bit 'ard, 'cos the orficer of the quarterdeckmen 'as only just joined the ship."

"Yes, the Admiral knew that well enough. Atkinson, Sir," says the orficer of the division, cool as you please."

"That's the stuff to give 'em."

"Yes, but not 'im—very rare the Admiral asks a cove a question what 'e doesn't know the answer to 'issel."

"But 'e don't know Tubby."

"Don't 'e, then! 'That's queer,' 'e murmurs as 'e moves on, 'cos 'e used to be named Jones when 'e was in my last barge's crew.'"

"Strewth! What did the Owner say?"

"I think 'e must 'ave swallowed 'is words from the look of 'is face. But the Admiral didn't take no notice. 'E just walks on chucklin' to 'issel, and when 'e gets to the end 'e stops and smiles."

"That was bad. It's stand from under when the Old Man smiles. I know. I was along of 'im when 'e was a four-striper."

"Yes, 'e seemed a bit too bright to me to last. 'You 'ave a fine ship's company, Captain,' 'e says.

"Thank you, Sir," says the Owner, givin' the impression 'e'd brought us all up on infant food 'issel. 'An' now I'll 'ave a look at the mess-deck,' says the Admiral with 'is smile still shipped. 'Very good, Sir,' replies the Owner, and 'oists the interrogative with 'is eyes to Number 1, 'oo moistens 'is lips and moves up nervous-like into station astern of the Admiral. The Admiral puts one foot onto the ladder down to the mess-deck and then stops sudden like and cocks 'is 'ead on one side."

"Yes, I seed 'im. Put me in mind of a ruddy sea-gull what 'as just spotted something from the lower boom. What 'ad 'e spotted?"

"Nothin'. 'E was just charmed by the music of the band."

"Go on."

"Fact."

"I've often wondered why the band plays while an Admiral's inspectin' the troops. P'raps it do 'ave a soothin' effect. Did 'e pass any remark?"

"Yes, and that's where I came in."

"'Ow?"

"Well, 'e asked the name of the toon. The Owner didn't know, the Bloke didn't care, and Number 1 ain't musical, so I was told orf to go and find out from Bandy."

"Well, there wasn't nothing in that, was there?"

"Not 'arf there wasn't."

"Why?"

"Well, the cove what gives the names to these 'ere toons don't give 'eed to what they sound like when you've got to report 'em to an Admiral what 'as suddenly lost 'is sense of humour."

"Ah! Things wasn't as pleasant when you got back as when you left, then?"

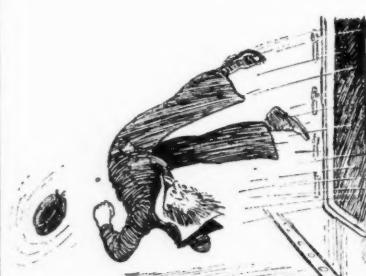
"Pleasant! Look 'ere—'ave you ever seen a cockroach in this 'ere ship?"

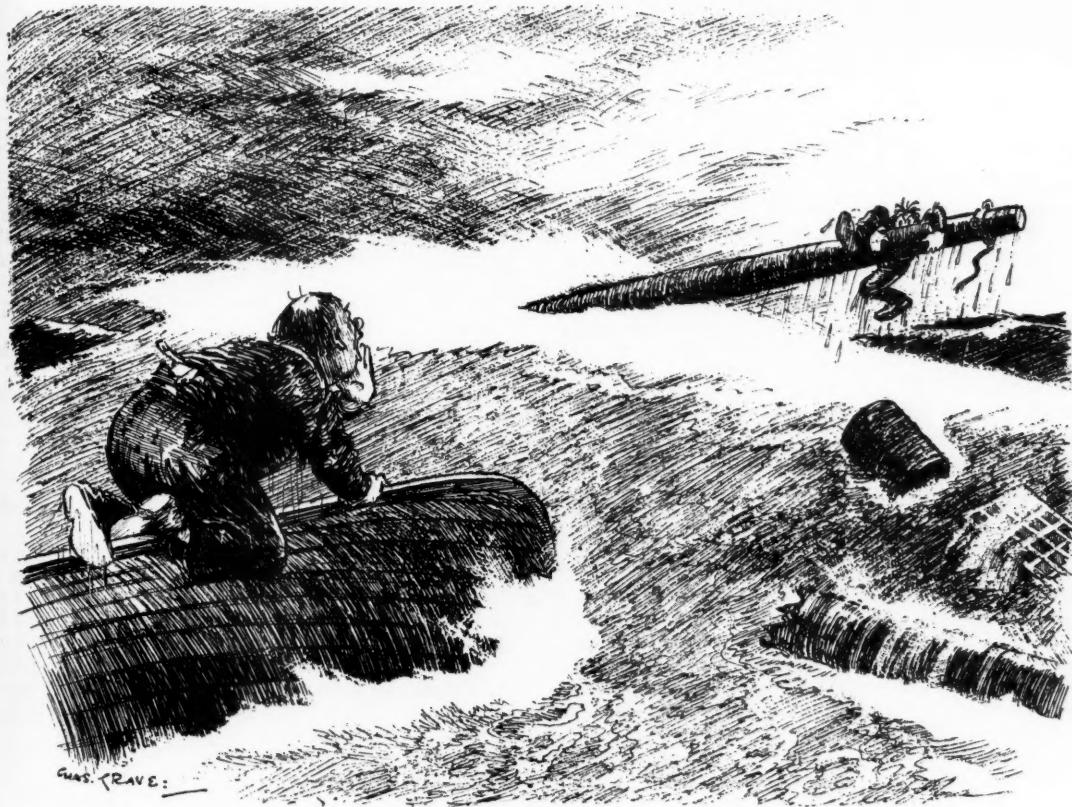
"Never."

"Nor me. But there is one, and 'e walked out along a mess-table to report 'issel to the Admiral. The balloon 'ad fair gone up over that cocker. The Admiral was saying things to Number 1 what I wouldn't even say to me wife, and I could see from the P.M.O.'s face that 'e was sorry 'e'd butted in to say that 'e didn't think one cocker borne unexpected on the ship's books signified. The Admiral was almost speechless by then; but, turnin' and seeing me doubling up with me message, he roars, 'And what the 'ell do you want?' or words to that effec'. 'If you please, Sir,' I says, saluting nervous-like, 'nothin' thing, Sir, but YOUR SWEET SMILE 'AUNTS ME STILL.'"

"Strewth! Was you daft or what?"

"No, but the blighter what gave 'is toon that tally must 'ave been."





"HEY! JOE, 'AVE YOU SEEN A LITTLE WOODEN PIPE WITH A NIGGER'S 'EAD ON IT?"

1929

"It's all very well these 'ere blessed flim-flambers—
These 'ere bloomin' 'Omers an' suchlike
Writin' books about the ol' windjammers,
Same as I used to know," said Mike;
"All about the wonderful sort o' things as goes on—
Or as used to go on at sea;
But nothin' ever used to 'appen as I knows on—
Leastways, it never did to me.

I've been follerin' the sea since I was a nipper
An' sailed in a billyboy from Humber way
With a real old 'ard case of a preachin' skipper
As wrung my ear-ole ten times a day.
An' I've done nothin' much else but roam about
In all sorts o' ships the 'ole world round,
But I never seed nothin' in it to write 'ome
about—
Leastways, nothin' as ever I found.

You turned in to a wet bunk after 'arf the night
'aulin'
On ropes as stiff as bars in a freezin' gale,
An' as soon as you'd shut an eye there'd be the bosun
bawlin':
"Turn out, all 'ands, an' shorten sail!"

ODYSSEY.

1934

You could grumble an' grouse, but you just 'ad to do it;
When the mate said 'Go,' you'd got to go;
'Ard work an' rotten grub an' there weren't much else to it,
You can take that from me—for why? I know.

You signed on an' you paid off an' you drawed your pay
an' blewed it.
An' when you got down to your last pence
You took an' signed on again afore you knewed it
(Because you 'adn't got no more sense).
The tack was full o' weevils an' the beef was stinkin',
What bit of it you got;
An' you went to all sorts o' foreign ports where the beer
weren't worth drinkin'
(An' when you'd seen one you'd seen the lot).

Some weather was good an' some was mucky,
The same as it is anywhere you go;
An' your pay was three-poun'-ten a month if you was
lucky;
An' some ships was fast an' some was slow.
You might get a kicking mate or a crazy cap'n,
For you never quite know your luck at sea;
But as for anythin', 'appenin'—wot you might call 'appen,
Well, it didn't, that's all," said he. C. F. S.

OUR YOUNG LADY AT SPITHEAD, 1937.

"You're not going to tinker with these ropes again Claud? Isn't there anywhere in this boat one can sit without having to move every time we turn round?"

"Claud, is that the *Drottning Victoria*?"

"Get up a moment, darling; you're sitting on the Plan."

"It says it's Latvian."

"Nonsense, Sylvia! Latvia is inland—isn't it, Claud?"

"Claud, I've just been down with Angela and she says will you be an angel and stay on this tack for another twenty minutes, because she's just put the kettle on to boil and the Primus works so much better when the boat's leaning this way."

"Claud darling, could you do something awfully clever and stop this front sail from flapping about? I want to take a photo of that ship with a thing like the Eiffel Tower on it, and the sail keeps getting in the way."

"Of course I knew perfectly well he was killed in his bath, only it seems a funny reason for calling a ship after him. Doesn't it, Claud?"

"Why shouldn't we wave back if they wave to us? I'm no more a Communist than you are, but those ones standing on the back end had such sweet faces. Didn't you see that one's face with the guitar, Claud?"

"Darling, do you think that yacht in front knows it has to give way to us? Of course I know you know more about it than I, Claud, but— What—it hasn't? Well, then, oughtn't you to? I mean, we specially don't want to run into the *Royal Sovereign*, because Sylvia's brother-in-law is on board it. You know, the one with those frightful teeth that Letty married."

"Ready About."

"Ready about what, darling? D'you mean we're going to have one of those awful moments when everything flaps? Oh— Honestly, Claud, do be careful! That great mast thing that swings about when you turn round like that nearly hit me."

"Claud, Angela says couldn't we hide behind one of those enormous square ships that look like Olympia so that no one would see we were in the area, and then pop out just when the Royal Yacht came by and see it close to?"

"It says in the paper Princess Elizabeth is going to be made an Admiral."

"Well, I hope she is. Don't you, Claud? She'd look enchanting in a cocked hat."

"Sylvia, Claud says would you not sit on the sheets? I can't see anything remotely like a sheet anywhere near where you're sitting, so I shouldn't bother to move; it's probably just Claud getting in a fuss."

"Was Queen Victoria an Admiral?"

"My dear, I'm perfectly certain she never wore a cocked hat? Did she, Claud?"

"Claud, I know you're fearfully busy steering and everything, but would you be a darling and help me with the focus of this camera? I'm not sure if the ship I want to take is a hundred or two hundred feet away. A hundred, I should think. Just look round over your shoulder a minute and tell me what you think. It's that big liner coming up just behind us I want to take. There! She's just blown her horn. Do you think she wants to overtake us?"



Impressions of Parliament

Tuesday, November 21st.—Mr. CHAMBERLAIN, convalescent from his gout, got a big cheer when he came in to-day. He had news of the first importance for the House, for the tragedy of the *Simon Bolivar* is not to go unavenged. In the last war, he



PARLIAMENTARY A.R.P. OR
BEN, MA. AND MI.

"Some thought that in war-time the House of Commons should be sandbagged."
Mr. Wedgwood Benn.

explained, the unscrupulous and inhumane methods of the enemy had obliged the Government to declare a ban on German exports carried in neutral ships; and now the latest German violations of the Hague Convention, to which Germany had promised her adherence as recently as September 17th, had forced on us a similar course. The device of the drifting mine, incapable of discrimination between type or ownership, was in particular an offence against the Convention. Mr. CHAMBERLAIN recalled the outrage of the *Athenia* and the wanton sinking of other vessels of neutral as well as Allied nationality. "These attacks," he said, "have been made often without warning and, to an increasing extent, with a complete disregard of the rules laid down in the Submarine Protocol to which Germany subscribed, or of the most elementary dictates of humanity."

You need no longer be in any doubt about what to do with your idle money, supposing you have any. Sir JOHN

SIMON told the House of two new issues which will be open to the public from to-morrow. The first, for the smaller investor, is a National Savings Certificate bearing a slightly higher rate of interest than the present issue and similarly exempt from income-tax. After five years it will be worth 17s. 6d. and after ten years, the full period, 20s. 6d., which is £3 3s. 5d. per cent. per annum at compound interest. Nobody can have more than five hundred of these, but up to one thousand pounds' worth of the second issue can be bought; this is a Defence Bond in units of £5, to be issued at par, offering three per cent. and repayable in seven years with a premium of £1 per cent. It will be subject to income-tax.

In the evening Mr. BUTLER made a statement about the position of the League, and said that the Government had decided with the other Governments concerned that the present was not a suitable time at which to hold the Assembly. Hardly.

Wednesday, November 22nd.—After the new Bishops of LONDON and BRADFORD had taken their seats this afternoon, Lord CECIL, who was Minister of Blockade in the last war, congratulated the Government on their decision to seize German exports, and only regretted that it had not been taken before.

As nicely as he could Mr. CHAMBERLAIN asked Members to refrain as far as possible from asking fatuous questions. Refusing Mr. ATTLEE's request for an extension of Question-time, he described how the previous war-time



CHATEAU GAILLARD
"This is a fortress war."—*Mr. Hore-Belisha.*

experiment of an extension in 1916 had led to a flood of inquiries which had so strained the Departments that Mr. BONAR LAW had been obliged to return to the shorter period. The proportion of winks to cockles between Brighton's two piers, or the birth-rate for second-class wheelwrights of Kirkcudbrightshire for 1877 are the sort of information which must give way for the time being.



"HEIL SIMON!"

"The Chancellor of the Exchequer seems to be developing a Hitler mentality."
Mr. McGovern.

In his second survey of the war on land Mr. HORE-BELISHA spoke of his recent visit to the Front, of the inspiring confidence of Lord GORT, and of the magnificent spirit of the troops. Our army would go on increasing until the cause was won. It had settled in, and was busily strengthening its section of the line, which, though not part of the main Maginot system, was nevertheless already provided with field works because of the proved uselessness of Germany's word to neutrals. In some places British troops were with French detachments and vice versa. Understanding between the two armies was complete. This was the first war in which British troops had ever been equipped with more than one blanket; they now had two. In the subsequent discussion, Mr. ATTLEE gave notice that when the House met again he would ask for a Secret Session, and Sir PERCY HARRIS supported his view that a frank debate was needed.

Mr. BROWN was later hopeful that the tide of unemployment was in the act of turning.



"Your Highness will be pleased with this new safety design—it only goes off at one end."

"Huns" or Heil Hatt'la!

HITLER and his Huns," said Mr. Winston Churchill in his superb broadcast on "The First Ten Weeks." One or two commentators, who liked the rest of it, have found fault with the "Hun" passage. *The Spectator*, in a leading article, said:

"Denunciation of 'Hitler and his Huns' involves a resort to abusive epithets in which even Mr. Churchill can hardly hold his own with Dr. Goebbels . . ."

Our revered contemporary (Up the weeklies!) seems to think that "Hun" is merely vague unscientific undocumented depreciation: as one might say "Hitler and his pirates," "Hitler and his highwaymen," or "Hitler and his embezzlers." But Mr. Churchill does not use words so loosely. We have not Mr. Gibbon's little book about the Roman Empire beside us; but we have *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*: and if you will look in your copy, Bobby, you will see that "Hun" is an apt and scientific historical parallel, such as any states-

man is entitled to draw. Further, the comparison may contain a racial truth.

On page 916 of the eleventh volume of the fourteenth edition of the work referred to above you will read that "HUNS" is "a name given to at least four peoples whose identity remains obscure:

(1) the Huns who invaded the East Roman Empire from about A.D. 372 to 453 . . .

(2) the Hungarian or Magyars who crossed the Carpathians into Hungary in A.D. 878 and mingled with the races they found there . . .

(3) the White Huns, who troubled the Persian Empire from about 420 to 557 and were known to the Byzantines.

(4) the Hūnas, who invaded India during the same period."

The word, like so many other things, seems to have had its roots in China. ("In the first century A.D. the Chinese drove the Hiung-nu westward," and "Hiung-nu seems not to

be a particular but a general term for warlike nomads.") But in Europe the word clearly indicates a *Central European people with the habit of invasion strongly marked*. If it is thought too grossly insulting to our enemies to suggest a general historical parallel here, let us look further down the column and seek some more particular justification.

The column, and the next, is spotted with such expressions as these: "Balamir" (chief Hun in 372) "began a westward movement" . . . "proceeded to invade" . . . "directed his victorious arms still further westward" . . . "next attempted to establish himself in the territory between the Pruth and the Danube" . . . "the irresistible Huns" . . . "the new invaders contented themselves with overpowering various tribes which lived to the north of the Danube" . . . "in some instances the Huns lent their aid to the Romans against third parties" . . .

And "about the year 432," we see the Fuehrer and the Duce lining up,

usual: "A Hunnic King, Ruas or Regulus, made himself of such importance that he received from Theodosius II an annual stipend or tribute . . . along with the rank of Roman general." But history anticipated itself and "Quarrels soon arose, partly out of the circumstance that the Romans had sought to make alliances with certain Danubian tribes which Ruas chose to regard as properly subject to himself partly because some of the undoubted subjects of the Hun had found refuge on Roman territory . . ."

They were still exchanging envoys and abusive messages when Ruas died (433) and was succeeded by two nephews with the well-known names of Attila and Bleda.

Bleda died in 445, and Attila, the worst and last king of the Huns, reigned alone. "He seems for nearly twenty years to have ruled practically without a rival from the Caspian to the Rhine." "With constantly recurring embassies he worried the two courts of Constantinople and Ravenna." He "marched," he led his vast army to the Rhine," he "sacked," he "plundered," he "destroyed." He was defeated.

"He was short of stature, swarthy and broad-chested, with a large head . . . snub nose and deep-set eyes. He walked with a proud step, darting a haughty glance, this way and that, as if he felt himself lord of all."

He died. And "almost immediately afterwards the empire he had amassed rather than consolidated fell to pieces . . . The nation, thus broken, rapidly dispersed exactly as the White Huns did after a similar defeat about a hundred years later."

The *Spectator*, we understand, feels that the sensitive henchmen of Herr Hitler would resent the appellation of Hun. For the life of us, we cannot see why. Attila's territory was roughly the same: he acquired it in the same manner; and, for the same good reasons, no doubt, he was always seeking to expand it. Moreover, it may be significant—no, damme, it is significant—that Attila finished (personally) where Adolf (personally) began.

Attila's last home and stronghold was Pannonia, where he died: and Pannonia included Vindobona (Vienna), and not so very far from Vienna Herr Hitler was born.

"The inhabitants of Pannonia," says our *E.B.*, "are described as brave and warlike, but cruel and treacherous."

Though the Hun empire was broken up, the Huns, you may be sure, left a lot of little things behind 'em.

It may well be that a direct line of blood connects Pannonian Attila and Pandemonian Adolf. Certainly, he

can't prove the contrary: and that must be a fair test, for it is the one he puts upon the Jews.

At all events, he has as much right to call himself a Hun as he has to call himself an Aryan.

And what with one thing and another, so far from agreeing that Mr. Churchill has been using low abuse, we feel that he may well have been guilty of almost pedantic and platitudinous accuracy.

"'Eil Att'la!"

PS.—And, by the way, who began all this? The Kaiser Wilhelm in his

speech to the German Marines in the year 1900:

"You are about to meet a crafty, well-armed and cruel foe. Meet him and beat him. Give him no quarter . . . Even as 1,000 years ago the Huns under their King Attila made such a name for themselves as still resounds in terror through legend and fable, so may the name of Germany resound through Chinese history a 1,000 years from now . . ."

Abuse? It's a compliment!

A. P. H.



"What d'you mean, you don't fancy 'Two 'earns that beat as one'?"

At the Revue

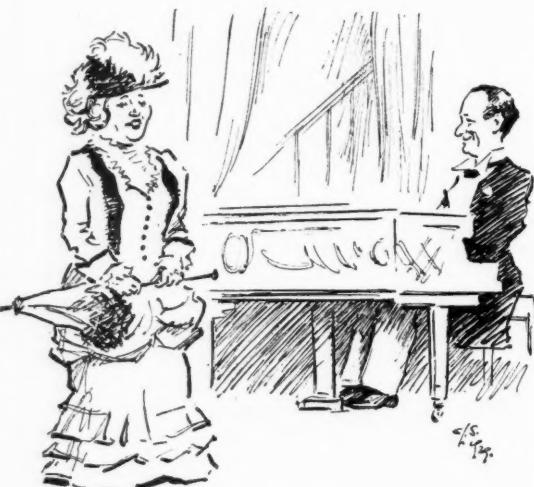
"BLACK VELVET" (HIPPODROME)

I FEEL very strongly that theatre programmes should be written with the sonorous austerity of letters sent to *The Times* newspaper by centenarian Etonians on the subject of hacking home from the hunt. For my taste they cannot take too lofty a note. While grateful for the information that "No. 7" is "The Rumble Brothers," when I read "Look out for your old chums, the Brothers Rumble, and oh boy! can they tumble!" I want to bite lumps out of the programme. And when in addition the items are not even numbered, I go paler than death as I scrabble madly to find out where I am. The programme of this show falls into the last category and beside its facetious confusion the Longer Catechism of the Inland Revenue is a crystal stream.

The entertainment itself pleased me nearly as much as this revolting document filled me with distaste. It makes no notable contribution to the arts, but it is very much what is wanted. Gay from the outset, it has a generous number of good turns and is constantly brightened by the personality of VIC OLIVER. Who could not be charmed by this surprising man? He combines LESLIE HENSON's ability to make a party go with the manners of OWEN NARES. He wastes time so brilliantly that it seems an act of needless extravagance for the management to have engaged a talented cast as well. And whatever fooling he is about is done with a graceful impudence which takes the audience at once into his confidence.

At the beginning he announces in his pleasantly broken American that everything about the show is absolutely British. While we are still pondering on this he breaks into a torrent of French to assure us that the Republic and only the Republic had to do with its birth. Have you ever heard a French circus-proprietor in full spate? He not only sounds but looks exactly like that. Then, without a pause,

he does the same office for Germany, becoming HITLER at his noisiest and most ridiculous, a loud-speaker operating among the more explosive processes of a soda-water factory. It is a very good turn, but I think I like him best in his attempts to play



MISS ALICE LLOYD AND MR. VIC OLIVER



A TANKOPHONE DUET
MR. TEDDY BROWN
MISS PAT KIRKWOOD

"Roses in Picardy" on a violin with DEBROY SOMERS and his band. "What note is that? A? Make it lower, please, I'm a G-man."

In case any part of the theatre remains unthawed, Mr. GEORGE BLACK has organised two well-planned raids to stir it up. At a signal from Mr. OLIVER, squadrons of his ladies converge on the stalls and pick partners for a polka, danced in the aisles. The British tradition of decorum in public dies hard, even in the face of offers so tempting. What more delightful sight than Generals and Admirals curling up in their seats pretending to be cripples and deaf-mutes? But on the whole the stalls forget their dignity. The second lot of raiders are armed with numbered bells which they distribute, the subsequent proceedings being conducted by that master of syncopation, TEDDY BROWN, accompanied by a team of girls carrying numbered flags with which to signal his commands. The results were most gratifying and the band had to fight to be heard. It may have been idle bias, but I had a notion that the fives were in a separate class.

Mr. BROWN's xylophone is as fascinating as ever. I could listen to it all night. The NESBITT BROTHERS are rapid-fire singers of quality, and one of them has a mouth which is a magic well of noises varying from FRED ASTAIRE's tap-dancing to the rage of Donald Duck. The BREWDINS are exceptionally proficient slow-motion tumblers. LEIGH STAFFORD and LOUISE LLOYD are the dancers of the party and do us proud. The deservedly leading ladies, all of whom strangely enough have voices, are PAT KIRKWOOD, ROMA BEAUMONT, CAROLE LYNNE and ALICE LLOYD, who gives an excellent imitation of her ever-to-be-lamented sister MARIE.

Chorus, all that it should be. Dresses, up and down, sometimes good. Music, rather ordinary, including three pieces by COLE PORTER which are below standard. Sketches, medium: how anyone dared bring up the old crack about the colonel's batman and his new wife baffles imagination.

But this is a good evening's fun, thanks mostly to VIC OLIVER.

ERIC.

At the Ballet

BALLET RAMBERT (DUCHESS)
"Lady into Fox," "Bar aux Folies-Bergère," "Lac des Cygnes."

THIS programme, in the contrast between *Lac des Cygnes* and the other two, showed where both the strength and the weakness of the Ballet Rambert lie. Their home is the Mercury Theatre, and of the intimacy of representation there the Ballet's admirable wit and restraint are a product. The Duchess Theatre is not too large to favour these qualities, so that the bigger stage and auditorium are unmixed blessings. It is then qualities of intelligence rather than of natural élan and plasticity that give the Company its excellence. A comparison with the Ballet Jooss is illuminating; for both are small troupes, characterised by restraint in conception and performance (though Jooss, to their detriment, sometimes trespass here), and both are essentially intellectual. Yet there is a fundamental difference. The Jooss Ballet are expressive in an impersonal way, their language is stylised; they render a subject in a rigidly disciplined pattern of movement. They are not

by nature *ballet intime*, and they do not need a small theatre. By contrast the Rambert Ballet are free in their expression, relying much on facial expression and movements whose kinship is closer with the drama than with the dance.

Lady into Fox fits the Ballet Rambert like a glove. The choreography of ANDRÉE HOWARD does justice to the spirit of DAVID GARNETT's twisted story. Mr. WALTER GORE admirably conveyed Tebrick's diffident tender pride in his wife, concealing a bewilderment before her overcharged vivacity which did not yet awake to the mean-

ing of those brusque graceful movements and wild looks. After the transformation this bewilderment develops through a frenzy of despair into tragic resignation as the vixen's animal nature gradually overcomes her feeling for him. The costume of the vixen, subtly suggestive of the crinoline she has quitted, heightens the poignancy of the drama, keeping the image of the wife always behind that of the fox. Miss SALLY GILMOUR's portrayal of the

The intellectual qualities of the troupe find scope of a different kind in *Bar aux Folies-Bergère*, devised by NINETTE DE VALOIS to music of CHABRIER. The piece is not wholly well conceived; it seems wrong, for instance, that the barmaid should emerge from behind the bar and thus render MANET an accomplice instead of a simple accessory before the fact. For even if the practice of bringing famous pictures to life is not open to criticism, to destroy their balance in this way is a dubious proceeding. Moreover not all the additional costumes are good, and the resulting combination of colours does not improve on MANET. But the brilliantly witty dancing — miming is perhaps truer — of the three principals, Miss PRUDENCE HYMAN as the Can-Can dancer, Mr. FRANK STAFF as the old roué, and Mr. GORE as the waiter, is quite delightful and contrasts very favourably with their performances in *Lac des Cygnes*. But this is essentially ballet in the grand manner, demanding the full melancholy of TSCHAIKOVSKY's violins, 'cellos and clarinets, and all the paraphernalia of stage trees, lake and mechanical swan; and, more important, that especial quality of abandon to the dance which characterises the

success of the Russian ballet and which is not here to be compensated by the high intelligence of the Ballet Rambert.

Messrs. ANGUS MORRISON and GUY JONSON at the pianos had indeed a raw deal the whole evening; for CHABRIER was not much more suited to *Bar aux Folies-Bergère*, where something more pointed — POULENC? OFFENBACH? — is needed, than the over-emphatic music of HONEGGER to the sensitive conception of *Lady into Fox*. And the highly appropriate music of TSCHAIKOVSKY for *Lac des Cygnes* is not suited to the piano.



NOT QUITE A LADY

Silvia MISS SALLY GILMOUR
 Mr. Tebrick MR. WALTER GORE

vixen's increasing sense of imprisonment, and her awkwardness in the gown he puts on her, are nearly as good in their way as LASOVSKY's frantic agony in *Petrouchka's* box. Chiefly, HONEGGER's unimpressive music makes this episode sensibly inferior. The costumes and décor by NADIA BENOIS are excellent. The vivid blue dress and red hair of Mrs. Tebrick, darting in and out between the more sober tones of the guests in the opening scene, remain especially in my mind. Only the parts of the Nurse and the Huntsman seem unsatisfactory, insufficiently knit into the drama.

Unchanging

THE team leans to the hill
On a crest of white gulls
Whose bright wings shadow
still
The open furrows,
So that the dark clay borrows
A cloud of summer
That so delights it dulls
The sheer blade's brightness.
It passes and leaves dimmer
For all its lightness
The soil's remoteness.
The eye must follow them,
Like torn paper
Tossed to the clouds,
Clinging to the wind's hem
In a wild caper.
As the team turns
See! see the crowds
Of white and winged wantons in the
air.
Again earth churns
To richness, fullness
Under the share,
And once more falling
Comes wheedling and greedy
The host that follows
Over the hill.
Then lost in far hollows
The cavalcade climbs,
The horses slow, steady,
The gulls swooping and calling;
And then, finally, stillness.

• •

Tragic Ending

ONE of the most poignant memories of my youth is of the time my elder brother Jim bled to death. Ever since he had bled for two days after having a tooth out my mother had declared that Jim suffered from haemophilia, and expected him to begin bleeding to death at any moment. This is how it happened.

Every year at the beginning of June my mother would begin saying that we ought to be thinking about a picnic now that the days were getting longer. My father would look up from his paper and grunt that it was too early yet; but by the middle of July he would start objecting to the places my mother suggested. When he had objected to all of them she would say, "Well, what about Fulford's Barrow again?" and my father would say he would find out when he could get the pony and trap.

I can never remember having a picnic anywhere but on Fulford's Barrow. It was only three miles away,

but we had to hire a pony and trap because my grandfather had once hired a pony and trap to take my father for a picnic when he was a boy. My mother once persuaded him to save the money and plan a picnic without a pony and trap, but when the day came he backed out of the agreement and made us eat our sandwiches in the kitchen.

So towards the end of July my father would go up to old Tom Hayward's to find out when he could have Polly, and early in August the picnic would take place.

On the occasion that my brother Jim bled to death we reached Fulford's Barrow around noon. It is the highest point in a range of downland, and famous for its early British earthworks. Its sides drop almost sheer for a hundred feet or so, and it is the bleakest spot for miles. Generally we would crawl in the earthworks to eat our lunch, trying to look as though we weren't actually frozen. Then we had to find some way to keep warm until it was time for tea.

My elder brother Jim was very tender-hearted, particularly towards animals, and it had always struck him that if he were cold who was free to run about, how much colder it must be for Polly, tethered to the trap. He had often remarked on this to me at previous picnics, but so far as I know his compassion had led to no positive action.

This time, however, it came to him that he might enliven the afternoon, both for himself and for Polly, by giving her some food. Accordingly he approached her gingerly, holding out a thistle, which he understood to be considered a delicacy by ponies.

To my brother Jim's surprise Polly set back her ears and declined the favour. But Jim was not to be discouraged in his philanthropy. He argued that Polly really wanted the thistle, and read into her indignant refusal a slight to himself. He grasped her by the forelock and tried to push it into her mouth. She bit his hand.

When my brother Jim felt that he had been bitten he dropped the thistle, let out a piercing shriek, and came tearing back to the earthwork with blood flowing from his hand. The noise he made reached my younger brother Henry and me where we were playing, and we scuttled back too. When we arrived we found my elder brother Jim lying on his back and roaring, while my mother was stroking his brow and saying to my father, "I tell you he's bleeding to death."

My mother's first thought was that my elder brother Jim and a doctor

should be brought into close proximity as rapidly as possible. My father suggested that he should be put in the trap and driven home, but my mother would not hear of it. She said that he would bleed to death more quickly if subjected to any kind of motion. Then my father said that he would take the trap and drive down to the nearest village, on the eastern side of the hill, and bring a doctor back with him; but my mother wouldn't hear of that either. She said that my father was a heartless brute to think of leaving her alone on a mountain with one dying child and two others, with no conveyance should the need arise. Instead she pointed out that although there was no road down the western side of the hill, there was a village which he could reach almost as quickly on foot as if he went down the other side in the trap.

As soon as my father had gone my mother discovered that my elder brother Jim was getting feverish, and she wanted some water to pour over his head. There is no water at all on Fulford's Barrow—how the Early Britons got on I don't know—and all we had was two thermos flasks full of tea. This my mother took and poured over Jim's head: but instead of cooling him it made him hotter than ever. Indeed it was fortunate that he was not scalded.

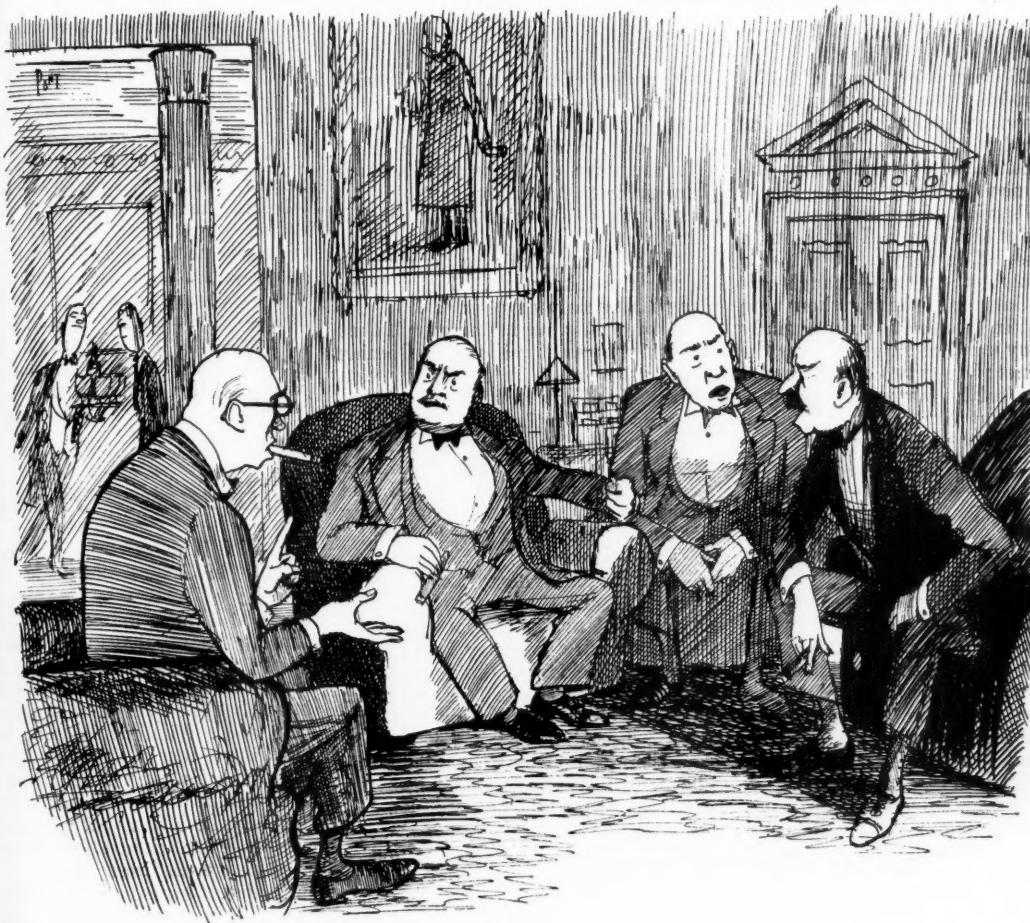
Just then my younger brother Henry recollects that half-way down the hill was a spring, and my mother sent him there with the thermos flasks and sent me to see that he did not fall in and get drowned.

As it happened, the spring was rather further down the hill than Henry had imagined, and to my mother, sitting with the bleeding Jim, we seemed never to be coming back. Jim too appeared to be very near the end. He was groaning badly and rolling about in anguish. It was evident that something had to be done about it if my mother were to avoid being left alone on the mountain-top with her dying son's dead body. In despair she put him in the trap and drove him down to the village on the eastern side of the hill.

When my younger brother Henry and I returned with the two thermos flasks full of water and found the hill deserted we knew immediately that we were lost. Henry had a small pocket-compass with him, and he said that if we followed the pointer we should no doubt reach home. We therefore set out walking in a northerly direction, when actually our home lay to the south.

Soon after this my father arrived in the doctor's dog-cart, having driven

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POPULAR MISCONCEPTIONS—HOW TO WIN THE WAR

several miles around the foot of the hill. On the way he had been explaining that my elder brother Jim suffered from haemophilia, and had asked the doctor how long it would take to die from this complaint. The doctor had assured him that given a severe wound death might ensue within an hour unless medical attention were forthcoming. This information had so steeled my father that when he reached the top and found everyone gone he remained calm and told the doctor that Jim had now bled to death and been taken home. He then begged a lift to the foot of the hill and walked back to our house.

Meanwhile my mother reached the village and found a doctor who examined my elder brother Jim's hand. Looking back on things it seems

curious that after that first sudden shock it had occurred to no one to examine Jim's hand to see if it was still bleeding. As a matter of fact it was not. Polly's teeth had just broken the skin, and all the doctor could do was bathe it and drop on some iodine. Greatly relieved, my mother drove up the hill again and sat down to wait for the rest of us.

She waited until the evening and when nobody came decided to go home. When she arrived there she found the whole village in confusion. My father had had the church bell tolled and had informed everyone of my elder brother Jim's lamentable demise. My mother found herself in the embarrassing position of having to explain that my father had been mistaken, and to account for his mistake she had to

pretend that Jim was badly injured. In the end she only managed to get rid of her sympathisers by asking them to organise search-parties for my younger brother Henry and me. They found us plodding steadily in the wrong direction at ten o'clock that night.

No one benefited from this adventure except my elder brother Jim. When he was still supposed to be an invalid someone asked him in my mother's presence why Polly had bitten him. Now my brother Jim had always hated margarine, and he was alive to the advantages of his position. He said that Polly had bitten him because he had offered her a margarine sandwich. He went on to declare that he would never be able to eat margarine again, because it would remind him of that terrible occasion. He never did.

Little Fiddle-on-the-Green Still Smiling

II

YES, very well, dear, if Hitler insists upon going to war I'm perfectly ready for him. And whatever I may have said about the Government in the past, it has my full support now."

"That's good, Miss Littlemug."

"Some of the faces, as I saw them in *The Times* all in a row, are rather a disappointment to me—though not General Gamelin, foreigner though he may be. In fact the thought actually crossed my mind as I glanced over the new Cabinet: One or two of them would positively *look better* wearing their gas-masks. Keep that to yourself, dear; they want all the encouragement they can get, as I very well know—and besides I shouldn't care to hurt anybody's feelings. Now about these windows: I'm sorry it's raining but I want you to pop out and stand at the bottom of the garden and wait while I run upstairs and turn on all the lights, and then see if any of them are showing. That's on the *front* side of the house. After that (perhaps the rain may have stopped, with luck) nip round to the back—you know the way, dear, and you'll find the gap in the hedge quickest in the end because I've locked the little blue door in case of an invasion—and do the same thing there.

"Take your gas-mask, dear, I insist. It'll keep dry under your coat, I dare say . . .

"The front bedroom and the scullery are both showing? I'm not surprised. Disappointed I may be, because I took

a great deal of trouble, especially with the scullery—but I am *not* surprised. Come with me, dear, and we'll see what can be done. I rather think it's my dear old godmother's black bombazine that's failing us."

"Your godmother's bombazine, Miss Littlemug?"

"Yes, dear. It's lining the curtains in the front bedroom. I had them drawn as closely as possible from the very beginning, saying to myself that I certainly wasn't going to let Goering or any of them have the satisfaction of thinking that because this house happens to be rather small one didn't take any trouble about it—and two nights ago, quite suddenly, I heard a violent knocking at the door. I said to myself at once, 'The German Army has landed.' How like them! I thought."

"And what was it?"

"As it happens, dear, it was simply young Richard Blow from the garage, only turned into a special constable. And as I said: 'You may be a special constable, Dickie, but that's no reason for not ringing the bell properly like anybody else,' and to do the boy justice, he admitted that it wasn't. And then he told me that a light was plainly visible from the front bedroom window. So I said, 'Very well, Dickie, even if I *have* known you since you were four years old, I suppose you're only doing your duty, and in that case I must sacrifice my godmother's bombazine.' And so I did, dear, and if necessary my dear old black golf-cape

will have to go too, and shall be sacrificed without a moment's hesitation."

"But couldn't you have bought some black stuff, or even black paper?"

"Ha-ha-ha! Don't mind, dear, or take the slightest notice if I sound rather embittered. But I must say it was a little hard to be told in the shop that the last roll of black paper had been bought by old Lady Flagge ten minutes earlier, and there was nothing left but a navy blue cotton, all over red daisies. But I took it, dear, because after all one *is* an Englishwoman and prepared for anything. And perhaps you'd just skip round to the back now, dear—I don't think it's raining quite so hard—and I'll go straight to the scullery and see about the navy blue cotton, Hitler or no Hitler."

E. M. D.

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Breaking Away

MY friend Omahoney has lived in London all his life, and his father before him; and his grandfather lived in Liverpool. He says that he believes that in the time of his great-great-grandfather they sometimes had an apostrophe after the 0, but they gave up all that kind of thing long ago. What he is doing now is founding a new political party, to be called the England Freedom League, and he came to me the other day to tell me about it. He was rather excited, as he always is when he talks politics; but he said I must listen, and everybody must listen, because we should want a new political party after the war, and this was to be it. Briefly, he said, England would have to be freed from the grossest tyranny ever devised by man.

"The grossest tyranny?" I said.
"Ever devised by man," said Omahoney.

And I didn't interrupt him any more after that because I saw it excited him too much. And so I got the outline of his policy.

There was a large army in England, he said, but it was never commanded by Englishmen, and it obviously amounted therefore to an army of occupation. Could any country be thought to be free under such conditions? I rather implied a query, but without actually speaking, so as not to excite him; and he said, Look at the present war: the Commander-in-Chief, Irish; the G.O.C. 1st Corps, Irish; the G.O.C. 2nd Corps, Irish too. What chance had an Englishman? And it was always the same. When the Great War started the Commander-in-Chief



"Nonsense! This was a short cut into the High Street long before these flats were ever thought of."



"But you ought to have seen the one that got away."

was an Irishman, and he naturally had an Irishman for his Chief of Staff. Later it got out of the hands of the Irish, but only to be handed over to the Scots. The same in the Boer War: it hadn't been going six months when two Irishmen were running it—Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener—and they gave the command of the cavalry to another Irishman, General French. And so it goes on, right back to Waterloo, when the army was commanded by an Irishman, as usual, and was entirely in his hands for long before and long after, and the Government of the whole country too. They may have had a ray of freedom about the time of the Crimea, but that was only because the Irish had just lost their star man and were a bit slow in replacing him. Look at the way, he said, that the world was enslaved by the Versailles Treaty, drawn up by a Welshman, a Frenchman, an American and an Italian. What chance had any nation that was not one of those?

There was one way for England, said Omahoney—one way to be free.

"What is that?" I asked, because he had lifted up my decanter and looked like breaking it, and I hoped to distract him.

"Dominion status!" he shouted.

"Dominion status?" I said.

"Dominion status!" he repeated still louder. "That will give us the power, under the Statute of Westminster, to break free from this tyranny and to smash it."

And he smashed my decanter resoundingly on my table.

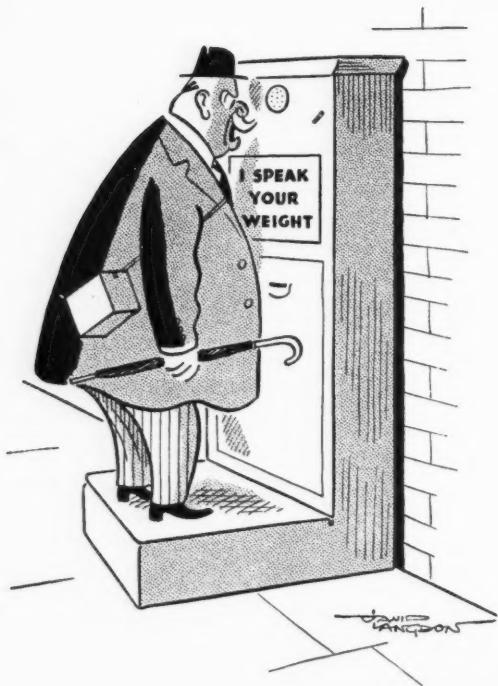
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"The Ladies Joan and Doreen Hope had chosen dresses of ice blue chiffon with gathered bodices tied on the shoulders. The skirts were full with three graduated bands of ruching and the dress was finished with a three-cornered scarf edged with narrow ruching to match the skirt. They was? . . ." *Calcutta Paper.*

Sure they was.

IN A GOOD CAUSE

We venture to call your attention once again to Mr. Punch's Hospital Comforts Fund. This Fund was started a month ago in order to supply voluntary working parties with raw material for splints, bandages and surgical appliances of every description. The need is still urgent and requests still come to us from Women's Voluntary Service Centres all over England. Our purchases are made in bulk and there is no charge for organisation or the expense of distribution. Any gift you can give will help to alleviate pain and assist the recovery of the wounded. Please address contributions and inquiries to: Punch Hospital Comforts Fund, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.



"What the devil do you mean—'Phew'?"

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Fragments of Genius

ADMIRERS of a rare and delicate artist will read *The Scrapbook of Katherine Mansfield* (CONSTABLE, 7/6) with constant interest and frequent delight, yet not without a certain uneasiness. Ought these unfinished stories and unposted letters and scraps of confession to have been published at all? Mr. MIDDLETON MURRY's affirmative is not altogether convincing. It is true that KATHERINE MANSFIELD never emphasised the beginnings or the endings of her stories, and in this book we find her quoting and approving a saying of SHESTOV's that "any kind of artificial completion is absolutely superfluous." It is true also that she herself published more than one passage from an unachieved novel. But she was a very fastidious writer, and when she did not finish a story it was often because she did not think it worth finishing—on one of the pieces here printed she comments: "This story won't do. It is a silly story." As for the autobiographical and confessional pages, so intimate and so poignant are they with their sense of loneliness and defeat that one cannot but feel that they were penned for the writer's eye alone. Yet for that very reason they are of absorbing interest, and after all we already have the journal which they supplement; while to return to the stories, however unperfected they may be, there is hardly one which does not give a taste of its author's characteristic qualities, the swift and light approach, the subtlety of

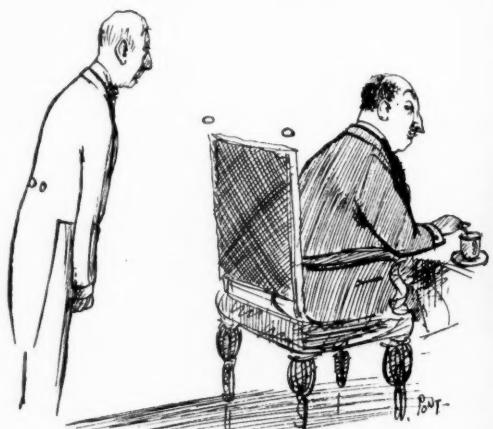
perception and the power of making significant, by their particular use, details trivial in themselves. This is a book which, whatever our scruples, we could ill spare.

Observations of a Portrait-Painter

The most exhilarating pages of the third volume of Sir WILLIAM ROTHENSTEIN's memoirs are those that deal with the practice of painting and the education of painters. The social setting is of secondary interest, but apposite as showing the milieu in which a successful portrait-painter and art administrator manages to get his work done. Incidentally there are intimate pen-pictures of T. E. LAWRENCE, YEATS, BINYON, BRIDGES, "MAX" SICKERT, RICKETTS and SHANNON, and social notabilities by the score. But distilled from these less essential records there is a residue of professional commentary, sincere, enlightened and worthy of careful assessment. "Does anyone," asks Sir WILLIAM, "paint supremely well now?" Is not our subject matter poor compared to that of the Victorians? Would it not be better if "abstract art" were to revert to its original habitat—textiles, for instance? Perhaps the best pages of *Since Fifty* (FABER AND FABER, 21/-) tell how the author, doggedly opposed by the "art-masters" created by a purely bookish Board of Education, tried to rear craftsmen rather than teachers at South Kensington under the conviction—how sane but how uncommon!—that a teacher must be above all a good workman with "abundant personal vitality."

Minx Reluctant

Unless one has read *The Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox* it is impossible to speculate how much the story of that celebrated Georgian beauty has lost or gained in Miss MAGDALEN KING-HALL'S *Lady Sarah* (DAVIES, 8/6). For here is a charming picture, as prettily composed and as innocent of real tragedy as the fluttering design of a fan, featuring the mother of the three great NAPIERS—TREVELYAN's "illustrious family of heroes"—as she might have been in her chequered and unstable youth. It is a novel, not a biography; and if you prefer your historical outlines filled in with tender imaginary colours, it is a delightful performance. The cast is interesting and carefully selected. The clan of FOXES, BUNBURY'S, GORDONS and



"My Lord, the bicycle is at the door."

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She. "OH, WAS THAT A BOMB?"

He. "YES, I THINK IT WAS. BUT IF IT WAS AS NEAR AS IT SOUNDED IT WOULD HAVE BEEN VERY MUCH LOUDER."

C. A. Shepperson, December 5th, 1917

Fox-STRANGWAYS to which the heroine was related by marriage, passion and friendship, together with the two GEORGES (Second and Third), who provided a senile patron for SARAH the baby and an almost possible husband for SARAH the debutante, are all vivaciously indicated. The style—graceful, unpretentious, easy—will serve admirably when the author turns—as turn, one hopes, she will—to the historical novel proper or to genuine biography.

Happy Though Hanged

Readers of *Dead Ned*, up to now Mr. JOHN MASEFIELD'S latest novel, will remember how Edward Mansell, hanged for a murder which he did not commit, was restored to life and smuggled aboard a slave-ship bound for Africa on its

lawful if deplorable occasions; and how there they parted company with him. In *Live and Kicking Ned* (HEINEMANN, 8/6) they may renew the unlucky young physician's acquaintance and follow his further adventures, which are as exciting and various as could be desired. Life on the Albicore under the fiendish Captain Ashplant proves nearly as unpleasant as in a Nazi concentration camp; and though ship, captain and crew come to the nasty end which is to be expected, seeing that their course has been set by the aid of black magic, and though Ned escapes the general disaster and finds that mysterious white nation in the heart of Africa of which the murdered admiral told him, his path is still beset with pitfalls. For the Kranois are at war with the M'gai and a bureaucracy busy with civil defence turns an unfriendly eye on an alien arriving inexplicably from

nowhere. Nor when, fortune having once more gone topsy-turvy, Ned returns to England with ambassadorial rank and a beautiful bride, can he forget that he is still a condemned felon, liable to the rope. But a nice concatenation of coincidences brings a tardy reward to virtue and a happy conclusion to a story which prettily displays the Laureate's uncommon gift of direct and brightly coloured narrative.

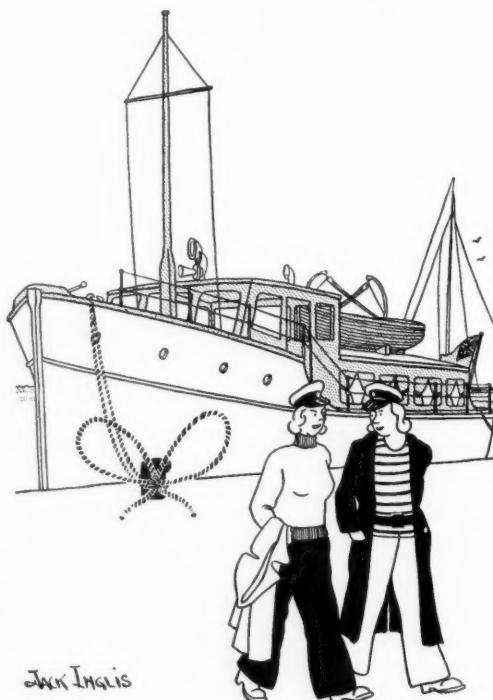
Mellowing Critic

The Amazing Theatre (HARRAP, 10/6) is the twelfth book of Mr. JAMES AGATE's republished theatre notices. In his own vein of modesty the critic records his astonishment at his triumph in "inveigling" no fewer than seven publishers to partake in this work of providing a permanent record of the theatre of our time—"the amazing theatre" because, "in spite of the cinema, broadcasting, television, dance-music, lawn tennis, motoring and the open hostility of the film-seduced Press—[its] dour resistance to mass attack, including the Storm Troops of General Indifference, strikes me as perhaps the most amazing thing in an astounding world." Mr. AGATE of all our critics is most markedly the man of the theatre, sealed to it from early years, constant in loyalty, learned in its history, literature and anecdote; a natural dogmatist yet content to seem to contradict in June what he has written in January; a clever phrase-maker; exasperating (which is to say stimulating), but never a bore. He seems to be mellowing, conveying his condemnations less savagely and his praises in warmer, even in ecstatic terms. This book is justified not merely as a convenient record but as lively writing by a man of wit, temperament and intelligence. You may think sampling and skipping may serve: you will be beguiled into solid delving and reflection.

Letters from Joe

It was the language, the manner, that made all the difference to the DAMON RUNYON stories we have hitherto been given in this country; think of most of them apart from that and consider whether they can honestly be called anything but melodrama. Similarly it is the manner—an entirely different one—that makes *My Wife Ethel* (CONSTABLE, 7/6) amusing and readable; for in substance these forty-four pieces are domestic sketches such as have filled comic papers for years. They all begin "Dear Sir," and end

"Yours truly Joe Turp," and they all deal somehow with Joe's wife, Ethel, a pretty, empty-headed, obstinate, argumentative young woman who nevertheless seems to remain the light of Joe's life. These are ordinary people living in Brooklyn; Ethel reads in the paper or sees in a movie or hears from her Uncle Dan something that makes her start one of her "around and around arguments" with her husband, and they wrangle amiably for five or six pages. These letters are not so funny as the stories, but they are consistently entertaining and skilfully done, and illustrated with clever line drawings by JOSEF. It will be remembered that the narrator of the other stories used nothing but the present tense; Joe admits all sorts of tenses, but no punctuation except full stops and question-marks.



Busman's Holiday

Mr. E. R. PUNSHON's *Detective-Sergeant Bobby Owen* frees himself from Scotland Yard's official eye in *Murder Abroad* (GOLLANCZ, 7/6) and goes off to France to carry out a more or less private investigation. But no sooner had he arrived in Citry-sur-l'Eau and begun to make inquiries about the mysterious death of an old English lady than he became an embarrassing source of interest to the local inhabitants. At the outset *Bobby* may have been rather more impetuous than tactful, and for various reasons the French police decided that he was a thoroughly suspicious character. In fact at one time he was in danger of falling into one of those deep holes from which he extricates himself with so much skill. This story is well up to the high standard of Mr. PUNSHON's detective tales.

Deletion

When MRS. AGATHA CHRISTIE placed her *Ten Little Niggers* (COLLINS, 7/6) on a small island off the coast of Devon, and then proceeded to eliminate them, she set her readers as neat a piece of guesswork as can ever have been devised. For these ten men and women, who by hook or crook had been enticed to Nigger Island, quickly found themselves in a most disconcerting situation. Their host and hostess, for instance, were not present to receive them, and then on the first evening of their visit exceedingly alarming and strange events occurred. Without revealing Mrs. CHRISTIE's secret it is possible to say that this curiously selected party was steadily reduced in numbers, and that it became increasingly certain that one of the survivors was a murderer. To spot the criminal is a problem that will secure the undivided attention of anyone who tackles it.

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